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[THE PORTRAIT.]

## THE FLAW IN THE DIAMOND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Miss Arlingcourt's Will," "Leaves of Fate," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

WHILE these young people were playing like giddy children on the brink of a volcano, there was a sudden cessation of espionage.

The two strangers had disappeared from town, although a portmanteau belonging to one of them was left in the landlord's charge, with the assurance of a speedy return to claim it.

Abiatha Broad's house was also silent and deserted. It might be that the non-appearance of Ruth Weston, her failure to return from the rendezvous with Mark, filled him with apprehension and alarm, which must have been deepened if he proceeded to the house in M—, for not a soul had set foot into it, since the woman, who was known as Deborah Wheaton in that vicinity, had taken leave of it, and proceeded on her evening visit to Chardon Valley. Wherever he was—whatever occupied his time and thoughts, Abiatha Broad was not once seen during that four weeks anywhere in Chardon Valley.

Meanwhile the tall building in Blocker Street received new life by the reappearance of Mr. A. Frost.

There was a solemn convention held, the morning after his limping step and well known cough sounded in the corridor.

"Well, who would think it, here he is again," said Jeremiah Pendleton, taking off his spectacles, and rubbing them vigorously with his red silk handkerchief, "now I should like to know what any honest man is off for in this way. Two weeks and a month gone, never a soul knows where! What was his business? Where has he been? Why does he return here?"

"Yes, sir—that's the question!" echoed Bob Stone, with due emphasis, "why does he come back here? There's none of us wants him. His room is a good deal better than his company."

"It's an imposition for him to take it, for, don't you

see, he keeps a better man out of it?" added Dick Manners, the clientless lawyer.

"Well," said Bob Stone, whispering, as if it were a great secret, "I can just tell you what the porter says, and if there isn't a meaning under it, my name isn't Bob, sir."

He was looking straight at Jeremiah, and Jeremiah, appreciating the position as much as if he had added, "your Royal Highness," put on his spectacles again, and nodded vigorously, as a sign of the earnest attention of the whole company.

"Now, sir, Mike, the porter, was fast in bed last night, sound asleep, sir, when the great bell was rung for admittance at the outer door. He thought, as he had a right to think, something very alarming was up. He didn't know but that the roof was afire, or the porter in the other portion murdered, or a watchman in trouble. He didn't suppose it was honest business; how should he, at twelve o'clock at night, sir? So up he scrambled, and with the poker in one hand, and a pistol in the other, he went to the door, took down the chains, and pulled back the bars, taking his time, sir, as anyone would, who doesn't know what's on the other side the door. But in a minute this Frost began coughing, and swore, sir, at Mike, the porter, who says, and says rightly, that if there's anybody to swear, he thinks it ought to be Mr. Jeremiah Pendleton, and not this upstart newcomer. Well, sir, when he knew who it was, Mike let him in. And there was a cab at the door, and a strange man besides.

"Go along, now," says this Frost to Mike. 'I've got back into London late, and I and my friend intend to pass the night here, rather than go to an hotel, or call up our friends.'

"And Mike says he stood scowling till he started away upstairs, and then his friend, as he called him, and he came up, and they put out the gas that Mike had lighted, and it was so dark when he peeped out, he couldn't see plainly; but Mike swears they carried or helped up the three flights of stairs a third party. They were off this morning before he was up, but he looked around pretty sharp, and down below in the hall he found—a grey scarf, a

woman's scarf, sir, and I should like to know what you make out of that?"

"Oh, the old reprobate!" exclaimed Jeremiah, "he'll be the disgrace of this house."

"And that isn't all," continued Bob, sinking his voice lower and lower, "Mike and I took a closer look up above, all around his door, and we found—" He made a little pause, looked at his gaping hearers, and shook his head mysteriously.

"What, Bob, what did you find?"

"We found a slip of paper with this strange, shaky writing on it. See what you make of it. I should think for all the world it was written with the pencil in somebody's mouth, somebody whose hands were tied, or something."

He laid before them a little wisp of paper, which seemed to have been torn from a pocket-book or diary. The characters were irregular, as if the pencil had, as Bob suggested, been held by the mouth, or some such unusual method.

Jeremiah wiped his spectacles again, and read in a low, awed whisper:

"Some—anyone—for the love of heaven, send this to Mark Daly, Ashton Villa, Chardon Valley. Mark, Mark, save me, I am in his power, the cruel, pitiless power of one who will wrest away your rights; you know the tyrant of your childhood, A. Frost he calls himself now. I am somewhere in London. Save me—save—Ruth Weston."

There was a moment's dead silence.

"Didn't I tell you," broke forth Jeremiah.

"Oh, we all know he was a villain. I'll kick him out of this house, lame or not lame," vociferated Tom Halliday.

"Hush!" said Bob, in a subdued voice, lifting up a warning finger.

"But what are we to do about it," cried Dick Manners, with energy, "something must be done at once."

"Here's something on the other side," said Jeremiah, turning over the paper he held.

"Appeal to Morley Ashton, Mark, anything to save me for the work which no one else can do."

"Poor soul! poor soul, what sore distress she must

be in," said Jeremiah. "I tell you, my lads, we ought to bring in a detective here."

"You have not heard the whole," interrupted Bob, in slow deliberate accents, making the most of his unwonted tidings, "the worst is to come."

"Come to the end, Bob, and don't keep us on the rack," exclaimed Jeremiah, the paper rustling in his hand like a tempest-shaken bough.

"We looked over the place up there, I told you, and just as we were coming down, I happened to look at the bannister—and there—"

He made another significant pause. Tom Halliday's mouth was dropped and his eyes were like two saucers. Jeremiah commenced wiping the clammy dew away from his forehead. Only Dick Manners had voice enough to articulate in a hollow tone:

"You didn't find any blood, Bob Stone."

"Yes we did, sir, the full mark of four fingers."

"I'll go for a warrant this moment," vociferated Dick Manners.

"Hold," said Jeremiah, "if you put it into the hands of an officer of the law, there is nothing more for us to do. Moreover, if they fail to find satisfactory proof, we shall only be made ridiculous, besides having an evil rumour attached to the house. See, we are a body of sound-minded men, not altogether lacking shrewdness and wisdom;"—here he stroked his forehead complacently—"let us put our wits together, keep open eyes, and work up the case ourselves."

"Agreed!" exclaimed Dick Manners.

"That's sensible talk," echoed Tom Halliday.

"Won't we look after the villain though!" growled Bob Stone.

"And in the first place, one of us must go to find this same Mark Daly," commanded Jeremiah, as a general gives out his instructions, "who volunteers for this place?"

"I suppose I'm the best man for that, I know the place. I went down to Chardon Valley last summer, put in the young lawyer, who had so few clients, but I'm afraid you will need me here."

"No, no, not in the least," answered Bob Stone, at which Dick Manners gave him a withering look, so that the offender hastened to add in stammering tones, "that is to say, we can get along just as well, because—Jeremiah will be here."

"Oh, certainly, if Mr. Pendleton assumes the management I am sure everything will be thoroughly done," replied Mr. Manners, who never for a moment questioned Jeremiah Pendleton's ability, or authority, however he might resent any dictation from the others.

"You will take the paper, as a proof of the good sense of our alarm, but be sure and bring it back again," resumed Jeremiah; "of course you will not need my advice to lose no time in the matter."

"I should like to know the programme you intend to pursue while I am gone."

"It is hardly determined yet," answered Jeremiah, with dignity.

There was no farther speech, for at that moment, Mike, the porter, came scrambling into the room.

"He's coming, gentlemen, the man's a-coming. He's been hunting for the scarf, I'm thinking, or the paper. It's well we were before him," he exclaimed, in a shrill whisper.

There was straightway a general scattering to the respective rooms, and every door was ajar, with an eye behind the chink, as Mr. A. Frost passed up.

Opinions were somewhat diverse with regard to the man's looks.

"Did you see how he was exulting over his successful villany?" whispered Jeremiah, excitedly, to his neighbour.

"I thought he looked pale with terror," said another.

"Oh, but wasn't he black-browed, and steeled up to some direful deed?" exclaimed a third.

Pale—the man certainly was; when he passed downstairs, and he cast one shuddering glance behind him, and then darted out, the limp nowise hindering the swiftness of his movements.

Mike had dodged his steps. He came back in a few minutes, his ruddy face aglaze.

"He has given his orders to the man to come and take away a chest from here. Oh, what may be in that same chest!"

Jeremiah's eyes shone like steel behind his glasses, "He has gone now," said he, "by fair means or by foul, we'll have admittance into that room of his. Bring all the keys you can find."

In a trice the whole group were at that upper door. They shook it, and then listened. All was still, as still as the tomb itself. The roar and bustle of the street below sounded far off, and uncanny, like the weird whisper of a sea-shell held to the ear of a listening child.

They looked at each other with shuddering glances, that dared not betray the horrible thoughts which rose within the mind.

It was Jeremiah's shaking hand which tried the first bunch of keys. You might have heard a pin drop, there, in the dim, dusty passage-way, as the sharp click against the iron rim of the bolt, told how it had slipped. He tried a second, and a third—the whole bunch through. It vain. It was evident Mr. A. Frost had taken care to put on a peculiar lock, that would defy curiosity's meddlings.

Silently Jeremiah stretched out his hand, and in silence another set of keys were handed to him. Still in vain.

"There is a locksmith round the corner," suggested Tom Halliday, in a voice that was scarcely above a whisper.

"Bring him here," answered Jeremiah, under his breath.

And the locksmith came, wondering at the white, scared looks, and grave suspense manifested over so slight an affair as the slipping of a bolt.

It baffled his efforts at first, even with the cunning instrument he had provided, but after bending down, to place his eye on a level with the keyhole, he gave a sudden, dexterous turn, and click went the bolt as it slipped aside. The waiting men drew long breaths, and were half ready to retreat in dismay now that the way was clear for them.

Jeremiah, without offering to touch the door, pulled out his by no means plentifully supplied purse, paid the locksmith, and sent him off. Then he turned to his comrades, who huddled closely behind him.

"Come," said he, in a low, hoarse voice, "now we will go in."

He pushed open the door, and trod lightly as he led the way into the room.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

"WHAT! all those letters finished?" Mark, lad, you have a wonderful knack of turning off work. When have you accomplished all this?" said Morley Ashton, coming into the library at Ashton Villa, and finding his secretary just sealing the last of a tray full of papers and letters.

"I sat up an hour or two after you left me last night," returned Mark. "I ought to work extra hours, while you give me so much play of a daytime."

"Well, I'm thankful they are finished. I thought I should have to take my share of them. The ladies have planned another long ride, and we cannot spare your attendance."

"What again to-day?" returned Mark; "it is very delightful and charming, but I feel guilty in going so much. I shall be spoilt for the close application and hard work which is likely to come."

"Don't think about that. Enjoy what is pleasant while you can. Take all the gladness of the sunshine, as the grape and the leaf do, get what bloom and sweetness you may. The winter comes soon enough, the storm, and the cloud, aye, full soon enough."

He shivered a little as he said it, and Mark's attention being thus drawn to his appearance, he perceived that Morley Ashton looked paler than usual, and that his eyes betrayed a sleepless night.

"You are not ill to-day, sir," he said, hastily.

"No, oh, no—not ill. But somehow I feel under a shadow. We have enjoyed these few last weeks, have we not? It has been a taste of elysium, but something seems to whisper to me that it is to break up quickly; that to-day I am putting to my lips the last drop which will be sweet, that the next draught will be unalloyed bitterness."

"Let us hope not," said Mark, sorrowfully; "if it comes to you it must come to all of us."

"You are generous in your affections, Mark, my lad. Do you think, though, they will stand the test of misfortune and ruin. Supposing—I only say supposing, you perceive—supposing you found one of your friends whom you had loved and trusted to be far from deserving the exalted opinion you have formed of him. You discover that he has occupied a false position; has deliberately, and therefore wickedly, deceived all who have honoured and trusted him—in one particular been culpably, dishonourably guilty of a wrong deed. Suppose all this, Mark, and tell me what would become of your affection, your friendship for such a man?"

Mark Daly's eyes were filling with tears. "All that Ruth Weston had said to him, all his own painful doubts, and haunting suspicions came back to him, with an earnestness of conviction which could not be gainsaid. And yet he could not be angry or indignant with this man before him. In spite of his judgment, of his interest, aye, even in the face of his own deep wrongs, Mark Daly's heart yearned towards Morley Ashton with a tenderness of compassion which he could neither resist nor explain.

He saw that Mr. Ashton was waiting for an answer. He looked up suddenly, his noble ingenuous face almost a mirror of the agitated thoughts behind,

and stretching out his hand, he replied, in a broken voice:

"It would depend, sir, upon the person. If it were you—"

"Well, Mark, if it were me."

"I should go on loving, and respecting, and reverencing. I should know it was a moment's fatal yielding to a powerful temptation, and I should forget that I knew it."

Morley Ashton clasped his hand warmly.

"Mark, Mark, my boy," he cried out, in a voice of keen anguish, "if the world were only full of such generous souls as yours—!"

And then a moment after he dashed one hand across his face, and laughed bitterly.

"Well, we have exercised our imaginations rather severely. The evil day is not yet, is it? Come, Mark, make yourself ready for a long canter. It is Ada's whim that we lunch at Holly Bank."

"At Holly Bank!" exclaimed Mark, his cheeks blushing hotly.

"Yes," returned the other, gloomily. "I can't think what put the idea into her head, but it is there. And so we are to visit Holly Bank."

Mark turned away his face, for he did not wish that Morley Ashton should see how much the prospect of such a visit moved him.

"I shall be ready in a few moments," he said, as he put away his papers. "Has Miss Despathorne come?"

"Yes, she is in Miss Darke's room. They are concocting some new prank. Ada is as full of mischief as a rose of sweetness."

And he sighed again, and then went out abruptly. Mark passed into his dressing-room, made the necessary change in his dress, then, after looking out into the corridor, and asking Mr. Ashton's valet to call him when the horses were brought up to the riding-block, he went back, unlocked the old sea trunk that had accompanied him in all his journeying, and took out the small box which contained the time-worn letter, and the miniature. He looked at the latter long and earnestly.

"Am I a recreant son, oh my hapless mother?" he asked wistfully, with a trembling lip.

As he replaced them carefully he came across the East India bundle which he had saved so long for Ruth Weston.

"Poor Ruth! She thinks me a thankless ingrate," he muttered again, and then added, meditatively, "It is strange that she keeps such long silence, when she was so earnest and eager."

Carelessly and unthinkingly he untied the bundle. The bright shawl, with its marvel of patient toil, the rich border of embroidered palms, dropped down across his knees; the gay handkerchief and quaint slippers fell to the floor. He picked them up, and placed them hastily in the trunk, as he heard the valet's voice. Something wide, thin, and heavy was underneath, but he did not stop to examine it. He locked the trunk again, and hurried down to join the equestrians.

Morley was just helping Ada to her saddle. She turned her bright face over his shoulder, and the blue eyes took a brighter sparkle as she nodded her morning's greeting to Mark.

"Now for the merriest day of all the season," she cried gaily, "we shan't come back until the last ray of sunlight has faded."

"That will make us return in the darkness," said Morley Ashton, turning a wistful glance upwards, where his mother and the Countess Woxley stood on a balcony to watch them off.

"Well, we are not afraid of the darkness, are we?" responded Ada.

"One never knows when to be afraid," muttered Morley, as he went in front of Mark, and helped Mabel as he had assisted Ada.

"Now then, we are off!" cried Ada, gathering up the reins, and kissing her hand to the balcony.

Morley lifted his hat also, and turned a second time to bow to his mother.

"What a happy woman you ought to be, my dear Constance," said the Countess Woxley, with a sorrowful glance after the party; "there was never a more devoted son, or one more worthy of a mother's pride and love. And Miss Donnithorne is very sweet and charming. Who did you say the other was—this Miss Darke? Not a relation, I take it. She also is singularly graceful, but I have had no good opportunity to judge of her face. Ah! it is such a sad reminder of my own lost hopes to see these bright young faces here!"

"You have borne your grievous trial nobly, dear Grace," answered Lady Constance, "but, do you know, I was thinking the other day, how much solace you might find in adopting into your home and heart some such worthy young girl as my Mabel. I cannot tell you how closely she has crept into my heart. I hope to find a great deal of gladness through her, when Morley has taken Ada away to



Holly Bank, an event which I suppose I cannot hope will be long delayed. I must make you better acquainted with the dear girl, that you may understand how near a daughter can be adopted."

Meanwhile the young people rode on, as usual, Morley and Ada leading for the first mile or so, and then, at the widening of the road, all falling abreast. Almost invariably it happened, when the next narrowing required a falling apart, it was Ada and Mark who led, and Morley Ashton was lingering behind at Mabel's rein.

A cloud, however light, was still hanging over his forehead.

"You are not quite well to-day, Mr. Ashton," said Mabel, after her first glance into his face.

"I am not ill, thank you," replied he. "I think I have a nervous attack, which is something not often in my line. Did you ever, in the midst of gaiety and seeming security, have an undefined sense of danger and trouble coming? As, while yet the sky is blue, and the sunshine bright, we feel the approach of a storm."

"I understand what you mean. I am sorry to know that such weird moods come over you. I have hitherto imagined, as in my own case, there was always a known and genuine danger which might come, and the consciousness of it woke the forebodings. But since you, who are placed so securely above common disasters, are conquered by these dark fancies, I must believe their cause more subtle and mysterious."

"Ah, Miss Darke, can anyone be secure against disaster? Think in how many shapes it may come. Surely our mutual experience at the scene of explosion has taught us that there is no security or safety in this life of ours."

"I suppose you are right," she replied, gently, "and if it were not so, how hard it would be for us to break the ties which bind us here. Earth would hold too powerful a charm. Misfortune leaves the hands which hold us down."

"You speak now of these vicissitudes which are outside of one's own control. I think sometimes those we deserve, the result of our own deeds, the reaping of what we have sowed, weigh most heavily upon us. It often occurs to me to ask: How securely do I hold the esteem of this one, the friendship of that one, the love, even of the dearest? Suppose circumstances change—some terrible temptation comes, and I yield. Suppose for years I have hidden from sight a cankering guilt, and it is suddenly discovered by all the world—does the friendship, the esteem and love of those who have been my friends drop away, and become as it had never been?"

Mabel read the meaning of the anxious eye through the assumed carelessness, and caught the house-anguish of suspense vibrating through the quiet tones. She looked anxiously into his face as she replied:

"Who is able to lay down laws for such cases, or even to shape effects from such causes? And yet esteem is one thing, and love another."

"Love—love," he repeated, half impatiently; "is it a passion that lives for ever, and is eternal? Does whoever loves me once, love me always? Oh, if that question could be answered for me!"

Mabel was thoughtful and grave for a moment, perplexed concerning his mood, scarcely knowing how seriously to answer.

She looked up presently with an arch smile.

"Well?" he asked.

"I was thinking of a quaint old answer to your question, and I do not know a better."

And she repeated for him:

"Can you tell me how love cometh?  
It does not come, 'tis sent!  
Can you tell me how love goeth?  
That was not love which went!"

Morley Ashton looked into her fair countenance, and a slow smile crept over his lips.

"Ah, yes, with a few rare natures—such as yours. But with her—with Ada—yonder, would her love stand such a test, if to-morrow showed me to her benefit of fortune and honour?"

Mabel coloured slightly, and looked away. At that moment when he had waved his hand towards his betrothed, Miss Donithorne was looking over to Mark Daly with a heart-glad smile on her lips, her eyes shining with an undisguised pleasure, which was suspiciously like true affection.

Morley Ashton seemed, for the first time, to catch an inkling of the state of affairs. A grave astonishment spread over his face, but somehow its gravity cleared, instead of deepening, and presently he repeated slowly:

"That was not love which went!"

"Ah," he added, "that is a test which would be difficult, I fear, for the majority of people to stand. It will go, I fear, Miss Darke, if the sky frowns and storms—most of all with women."

"No," said Mabel, slowly, but firmly, "you must not think so of women. A true heart comes out

stronger and tenderer when misfortune overtakes you, and of all human hearts a wife's, and a mother's, is the most unselfish."

No more was said, and it was Mabel who hurried on to join the others.

She thought Morley Ashton had forgotten his singular depression for the remainder of the ride, he was so gay and genial, so running over with sparkling repartee and gay badinage, so entertainingly eloquent with stories of the various scenes and legend-plotted buildings which came to view.

They came down a rather steep hill at a brisk trot, plumes and curls flying, even the gentlemen, with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, warmed with the glow of exercise, exhilarated by rapid riding, and the fresh air as by a glass of sparkling wine, the purest and most beautiful, such as a kind providence holds out to the weakest and poorest with every new morning's dawn. Then they swept around a curve which followed the playful meandering of a narrow river, and were again upon the summit of a hill, below which lay outspread as fair a scene as England can discover among her fairest.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mabel, and caught a long breath of delight too rare for speech.

Mark Daly's eyes were misted over. He dared not lift them, or turn his averted face; lest his companions should read all the agitation which filled his heart.

Morley Ashton's forehead clouded, and the gloom swept back into his eyes, while Ada, for a wonder, looked pensive and thoughtful.

She pointed with her delicately-gauntleted hand towards a grand old building, on a spacious lawn just off from the water's edge, surrounded by a belt of noble trees, which stood out from the fair diversity of village roofs, sloping knolls, and winding roads, in conspicuous stateliness and beauty.

"And that, Morley, is Holly Bank?"

"Yes, it is Holly Bank," replied Morley Ashton.

Did either of them notice the shiver which accompanied the words?

"It is a charming home," said Mabel, looking into Ada's face, to see if the young girl had thought to remember, as she had done, who was some time coming to be the mistress of this fair domain.

"Yes," responded Ada, slowly. "Papa says there is not a finer in the United Kingdom."

There was a slight conflict in her heart, which sent a faint revelation to her eyes, as Ada said this. She was proud to remember that this fair inheritance and its distinguished master were waiting for her acceptance, very vain and proud of this knowledge—but—and here she cast a furtive glance behind at the graceful figure and the youthful face of one who was now the secretary to the master of Holly Bank.

A young girl's heart is a great mystery, even to the wisest woman; but there is one thing we all know—to the happy, vain, maybe selfish nature of these gay coquettes there is but one sure salvation—the entering in of a true and honest love. Happy that gay young butterfly who finds it, and is saved from fluttering into a gilded net, where is only a golden flash, and not the true flame of warmth and love, for it is the saving of her own soul and character from shrivelling, narrowing worldliness, if from no deadlier sin.

Ada Donithorne looked over to Mark Daly, and that very moment, thrown from his guard, Mark had looked up, and to her.

All the unconquerable attachment, all his hopeless devotion, and through that some other deep and grievous melancholy were revealed to her, and appealed for her sympathy and compassion.

The blue eyes moved on to the pattern, pride and hero of the shire. How grave, severe, and gloomy—but in a way that instead of appalling for sympathy, seemed to repel and harden her—he looked! Then and there Ada Donithorne's heart spoke out to her, the waking soul, touched by the fire of truth and love, started up, throwing off, however feebly, a portion of the frivolity, weakness, and little vanities which had hitherto been a part of her character. Then and there, with beautiful Holly Bank lying outcrying before her, and its distinguished and gifted master riding by her side, she said to herself that if it were possible, she would choose a truer happiness, and go whithersoever, or to whatever humble abode, Mark Daly might lead her.

"I will throw myself at papa's feet," she said, "I will tell him the truth, and, if needs be, I will tell Mr. Ashton the same. But not quite yet, not till to-morrow, certainly."

And so she also put away the haunting shadow that darkened the bright pathway.

They were expected, for Morley Ashton had sent a servant before them, with orders for the luncheon to be provided, and the gates were wide open. Notwithstanding that the walks were carefully tended, the place wore a deserted air. Those unmistakable signs of family occupancy were all absent. It was like a child's

playroom, with the little owner gone. There are the toys, the beautiful pictures, the story-books, possibly the chirping birds; but all things are in trim order, like a room on exhibition, and you know it is a long time since there has been a romping play, or little disorderly, destructive fingers among the pretty things.

So at Holly Bank, though the doors were flung open through the rooms, and all well aired and warmed, there was a chill, which struck our party as they dismounted, and ran up the steps.

The old housekeeper and her son were in the hall, ready with their respectful greetings for the master. Morley Ashton answered them kindly, but he was evidently glad to get away, and led his guests into the front drawing-room.

"Nothing has been touched," he said, apologetically. "The furniture is just as it was, but it may interest you by its quaintness, if it does not invite you by its luxuriousness."

"You have never lived here then?" questioned Mabel, who was the only one who seemed untroubled, and eager to enjoy and examine everything.

"No, I would not leave my mother; and, beside, I think I prefer Ashton Villa. It is smaller, but more snug and cosy, and it seems to me that it is sunnier and pleasanter."

Mabel smiled in her thoughtful way.

"But a happy family circle would transform everything here," she said. "I think it is only the deserted look which mars the beauty."

Morley walked restlessly from one window to the other. They all saw that he was singularly ill at ease, although he tried to fulfil his duties as host, with his accustomed ready grace.

But Ada, perceiving that Mark could hardly force a smile, roused herself from her abstraction, laughed, and talked in that enlivening, contagious fashion, which soon produced a marked change in the mental atmosphere.

The call to luncheon helped, and when they rose from the table, all but Mark had returned to the appearance at least of unclouded gaiety.

"Now, then, Morley, are we to have a *carte-blanche* to go wherever we have a mind," she asked, when he pushed away the silver tray of fruits, and rose from the table. "The chief delight of these old houses is the undeveloped mysteries we may hunt up."

"Go where you like," he said. "I will take Mark to look at a magnificent growth down in the park, then we will join you."

So the two girls ran, like children, from room to room of the great house, filling it with the unusual music of silvery laughter and gay young voices.

They found one suite of rooms very richly and fancifully furnished, still such a pleasant contrast to the stately gloom of the rest, that Ada was quite charmed, and called the housekeeper to explain what she declared must have a romantic history.

The old woman was just telling them, when the gentlemen came up the stairs. She dropped her voice instantly, and finished in a whisper:

"You see these rooms were always kept locked in the last master's time; nobody was allowed in them. But I did hear the other housekeeper say once, that there was a beautiful young girl lived here, nearly a year, and these were fitted up for her. I expect there was something wrong, Miss Donithorne, and it isn't best to talk before the gentlemen."

Mabel blushed crimson, and walked out quickly, but Miss Donithorne lingered, admiring the pretty silver filigree baskets, and cologne stands, that were set here and there, somehow with a look as if nothing had been stirred since fair hands had arranged them there.

"If I lived here I would choose these rooms," she said, pensively.

The old housekeeper dropped another courtesy.

"And indeed, dear lady, it is likely we shall soon be made happy by your coming."

Ada bit her lip, and ran out of the room, saying, in her confusion, the very thing she had been warned to avoid.

"Oh, Mr. Ashton, we've been admiring these charming rooms, about which there is such a delightful mystery. Nobody knows anything more about that they were fitted up for a beautiful girl who lived here a year and then vanished."

Morley Ashton looked in, gave another shiver, and turned back. Mark Daly, however, crossed the threshold, and went from one article to another. He came presently to a workbasket, still with all the implements within it, the snow of the flossy silks yellowed by time, and the spools quaint and old-fashioned. A tiny bit of embroidery was there, with the needle rusted in the last article.

Mark seized upon it, thrust it into his bosom, and came out with a pallid face, and lips set grimly to hide their tremor.

Ada was calling merrily from the dark staircase leading into the gabled attic.

"Come, come," she cried, "here is the romance-haunted spot, come all of you, for I am afraid a ghost will rise, even in broad noonday."

They followed, Morley very still and grave, Mark only anxious to hide the strong agitation which well-nigh mastered him. But Ada found Mabel quite as eager and delighted as herself. Between them they hunted over the great chests, the cumbersome wardrobes, the dusty shelves.

Of a sudden Ada uttered a little cry of astonishment and pleasure.

"The ghost, the ghost!" exclaimed she; "this is the young lady's picture, I am sure. What a shame to board it over in this fashion!"

She had found a square package with thin boards tied over it, and her woman's prying fingers had loosened the cords, so that the covering dropped away and revealed a very fine picture of a very beautiful woman in the pride of youthful bloom.

She dragged it forward to a better light, calling for general admiration, both of her prowess, and its prize.

But Morley Ashton, turning deadly pale, exclaimed in a tone of mingled agony and horror:

"Oh, pitiful heavens!"

And ran rather than walked out of the place, down the stairs.

"A ghost indeed," commented Ada, opening her blue eyes in astonishment, and it must be confessed with a little secret delight at discovering the vulnerability of the hero. "Here's something more than a dead secret. Come, Mark, come and help me admire this lovely face."

Mark came, not pale, but with a crimson glow flaming out from his whole face.

He bent down and looked—ah, with what a yearning, passionate gaze!

"Yes," he said, in a low, hoarse voice, "she is beautiful. Oh, Miss Donnithorne, I thank you for giving that face back to the blessed light, for lifting it out of this obscurity and obloquy."

Ada, who had been kneeling lightly before the picture, turned and looked up at him. She was aware, at last, that she had indeed disturbed a living, instead of a ghostly mystery.

Mabel, disturbed by a vague, magnetic consciousness that some great revelation was at hand, knowing full well that she should only be in the way, stole softly down the stairs, out into the garden.

Ada Donnithorne rose up from her knees and shook off the dust, then held out her hand, with a sweetness and purity of look, as new as it was becoming.

"Mark," said she, "you ought to be assured of my sympathy and good will. If there be anything right for me to know, I shall listen with earnest attention."

His eyes left her face, and went back to the pictured semblance of a very different, and yet as lovely a countenance.

"Yes, yes," he murmured, "we have disturbed a ghost, and it gives me its solemn rebuke. I have been weak, cowardly, unfaithful. It is my duty to see that the picture there is not thrust into such a place as this. It is my work to restore it to its honourable place."

And then suddenly he caught her hand.

"Miss Donnithorne, you have not given you betrothal promise for wealth or station, but to the man himself. Tell me that you love Morley Ashton for himself alone."

The blue eyes dilated, and darkened to purple; the girl's red lip curled.

"Are you pleading for Mr. Ashton? Do you know that I made my decision this very day? I said I would go home, and tell my father I could not love him, that it would make me miserable to marry him."

And then the golden-fringed eyelashes dropped to the cheek that was deepening fast to carmine.

Mark trembled from head to foot with his desperate effort to control the agitation which threatened to sweep away the barriers he had set with so much care.

"It will crush him to lose everything!" he muttered despondently.

"I think you speak very strangely, Mr. Daly," said Ada, in a hurt, almost indignant voice. "It is well enough to leave Mr. Ashton to plead his own cause. I do not believe he takes it so much to heart. If the truth were shown, I believe he cares far more for Mabel Darke."

Mark's face cleared a little.

"And you—" he exclaimed.

"I told you before that I do not love Morley. I do not wish to marry him. They were so anxious at home, I respected and admired him, and it was pleasant to make everyone happy—and—and—I didn't know my own heart."

He had her hand in his now, and held it fast.

"Ada, dear, dear Ada, you know, without my telling you, how every throb of my heart is thrilled with love for you, a love I believed to be hopeless, and utterly vain, but which would not be crushed, or put away. Ada—Miss Donnithorne, if you were released from your betrothal to Mr. Ashton, if your father's prejudices could be surmounted—would you, could you condescend to be my wife—the wife of a poor, friendless man like me?"

The rich, impassioned tones held a world of anxious suspense, of vital, absorbed meaning upon her reply. His eyes held hers, knowing what she could not yet understand that he was applying the test, as the alchemist tries his gold.

Well and happy was it for Ada Donnithorne that the new-born love had purified her heart of its little vanities and weaknesses, its worldly ambitions and selfishness. She stood a moment, with her sweet young face paling and flushing, then she stepped forward, and holding out her hand, answered softly:

"When I have a right to take off this ring, Mark, and my father will give you liberty to replace it with as humble a substitute as you choose, you will find one heart made glad and happy. You have taught me to see how wrong it is for myself and for Morley to go to the altar, with such a poor affection as we have either of us to offer."

Mark took her hand, and kissed it reverently.

"I dare to hope that the time will come when you will rejoice to remember this proof you have given of your generous disinterestedness," said he.

And then he made her such a bow as the old knights, in the famous days of chivalry, gave to their mistresses, stepped back, and stood before the picture.

"Miss Donnithorne," said he, "this is my mother's picture! You have taken it out of the darkness and dust. Please heaven, it shall not return to them again."

Ada thought for a moment that he had taken leave of his senses, but a second glance into the clear, bright eyes, showed her that he had never been more collected, never so solemnly earnest.

She did a very sweet and womanly thing, this Ada, who had been so light, and frivolous, and full of little selfish caprices. She bent down, and touched her fresh young lips to the dusty canvas.

"Your mother, Mark! Oh, how beautiful she was!"

I know that she was good and pure."

Mark's eyes filled with warm tears.

"May heaven bless you for your goodness, and condescension, Miss Donnithorne," he said.

(To be continued.)

**A STATUTE TO LORD BYRON.**—The municipal council of Missolonghi has decided on raising a monument to the memory of Lord Byron, who died there in 1824, in gratitude for his efforts in aid of Greek independence. The costs are to be defrayed partly by the municipality and partly by public subscription. A commission has been named to collect the necessary funds.

**A YEAR'S CHANGES WITH ROYALTY.**—In the year 1868 the following changes occurred amongst the Royal houses of Europe:—Seven members of Royal families died—viz., the King of Bavaria (aged 82), Duke Joseph Sachsen-Altenburg (79), Duke Ernest of Wurttemberg (61), Landgraf Karl Hessen-Philippthal (55), Count Hugo Lippe-Weissenfeld (59), Princess Emma-Schaumburg-Lippe (79), and Countess Gustave Lippe-Weissenfeld. Twelve Princes and eight Princesses were born, to make up for the losses incurred by the Royal Chapter; namely, two Austrian Archdukes (sons of Charles Louis of Austria and of the ex-Grand Duke of Tuscany), a Crown Prince of Greece, a Russian Grand Duke (son of the Czarévitch), a Prince of Prussia (son of the Crown Prince), an Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a Prince of Teck, two Princes of Hesse, a Prince Liechtenstein, a Prince Schaumburg-Lippe, and a Prince of Oldenburg; an Archduchess of Austria, Marie Valerie, born in Pesth, nine months after the coronation; a Royal Princess of England, a Princess of Anhalt, one of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, an Infanta of Spain (daughter of Don Carlos), a Princess of Bavaria, one of Oldenburg, and a Countess of Lippe-Weissenfeld. Eleven Royal marriages were celebrated within the past year—e.g., the titular Grand Duke Ferdinand IV. with Princess Alex. of Parma, Crown Prince Humbert of Italy with his cousin Princess Marguerite de Savoie, Grand Duke Frederic Francis II. of Mecklenburg-Schwerin with Princess Maria of Schwarzenburg-Rudolstadt, Archduke Henry of Austria with Miss L. Hoffman, Duke Nicholas of Wurttemberg with his niece the Princess Wilhelmine, the Duke of Alençon with the Princess Sophie of Bavaria (formerly betrothed to the present King, who was not allowed by Richard Wagner to marry her), Count Alphonso di Caserta (Prince of both Sicilies) with his cousin Antoine (Countess de Trapani), Count Gaetano Gergenti with Prin-

cess Isabella de Bourbon, Prince Alexander of Oldenburg with Princess Engenie von Leuchtenberg, Prince Louis of Bavaria with the Archduchess Maria Theresa of Este, and Prince Nicholas of Nassau with the Countess Merenberg, Nathalie von Dubell, *sée* Puschkin. The number of reigning Sovereigns is reduced to 38, including the Emperor of Brazil, a Braganza Coburg, it is said. Of these the oldest is the Pope (75), and the youngest Prince Henry XXII. of Reuss Greisz-Schleiss-Lobenstein Gera (22). There are four Emperors, a Sultan, a Pope, ten Kings, one Queen, six Grand Dukes, five Dukes, and ten Princes. Five and-twenty Sovereigns have sons heirs-apparent to the throne; one (the Emperor of Brazil), a daughter; six, brothers; three (including the Sultan), other relatives; and two (Brunswick and Reuss of the elder branch) who will be succeeded by Sovereigns of other dynasties.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**COPYING INK.**—A good copying ink may be made from common violet writing ink, by the addition of 6 parts of glycerine to 8 parts of the ink. Using only 5 parts of glycerine to 8 of the ink, it will copy well fifteen minutes after it has been used. With fine white copying paper the ink will copy well without the use of a press.

**WHITE HANDS.**—The best means to "whiten red hands" is to wear a pair of cosmetic gloves thus prepared: Fresh eggs, 2; oil of sweet almonds, 2 teaspoonfuls; rose-water, 1 oz.; tincture of benzoin, 36 grains. First beat the eggs and oil together, and then add the rose-water and tincture. Well daub a pair of kid gloves with the mixture on the inside, and wear them during the night.

**DR. F. BARKER** recommends the following rules for avoiding sea sickness:—1. Rest yourself on the eve of your departure, so that the nervous system may not be over-excited when you go on board. 2. Lie down before anchor is weighed, and keep in a horizontal posture for two days running. 3. Eat as much as you can at every meal, but without raising your head. In this way the stomach does not lose the habit of digestion; you keep up your strength, and gradually get accustomed to the ship's motion. By following these rules, the heaviest gales may be encountered without sea sickness.

**ANTS ABOUT TREES.**—The Rev. W. P. Smith, M.D., communicates the following mode of dealing with ants at the roots of fruit trees, which are very troublesome and destructive, particularly in warm climates: "I was raising some tobacco, and operated with the green leaves in the following manner: I removed the earth from around the trees or vines as much as I could without injuring the roots; then I put a handful of tobacco leaves around the tree or vine where the ants worked, covered them nicely with the earth, and pressed it well. In a few cases I had to repeat the dose, but I have tried it often, with uniform success, in driving off the ants, and saving the tree or vine."

**DR. DRAPER** has given a simple means of guessing, more or less accurately, at the amount of chicory present in mixtures of coffee and adulterant. Chicory—almost everybody knows in these days—sinks in water immediately, while coffee floats; and Dr. Draper therefore takes a tube and draws out the closed end to a narrower diameter than the upper part. The drawn-out end, into which the chicory sinks, he graduates into four equal divisions, and thus is able to arrive at the proportion present in different samples. This mode of testing is applicable to the estimation of other adulterants besides chicory, for nearly all the substances that have been found mixed with coffee sink in water.

THE acquisition of Sir Charles Eastlake's art library, recently purchased by the National Gallery, and the removal of the library of the Royal Academy to Burlington-house, have induced the trustees to form a collection embracing every attainable work relating to the fine arts, and to establish a library of reference and reading-room for the use of students, and accessible for the public under certain regulations.

**"A BLACK JACKET."**—This is a "slang phrase" in merchandise, and its origin is rather curiously accounted for. Some worthies who were manufacturing accommodation bills found that it was useful for their forging purposes to have a variety of blank cheques on well-known banks. Being out of a cheque on the Royal Bank, a domestic servant was sent to a neighbouring merchant with a penny to ask the favour of "a blank cheque" from his bank-book. The girl, not understanding anything at all of banking, conjectured it to be an article of dress with which she was quite familiar, and the sound, when not quite articulately spoken, became to her innocent ears "a black jacket," which now amongst that fraternity means a cheque for fraudulent use.





[THE INTERCEPTED LETTER.]

## THE PHANTOM OF MARION.

## CHAPTER VII.

MR. HENRI CHALMERS sat in his room in the Regent House, in a very indolent position, yet he seemed to be thinking deeply of and upon a perplexing subject, for he pulled quite sharply the ends of his long, blonde moustache, and gazed meditatively at the floor, with brows contracted.

As the reader has but a faint idea of the *personnel* of this gentleman, a little information upon the subject may not be inappropriate. Mr. Henri Chalmers was a man of about five feet ten inches in height, well-proportioned, and very powerful, though slender. His face was bright, agreeable, and, at times, made almost prepossessing by the nobility of its features, and the quick, sparkling glances that shot from his dark blue eye. Indeed, his every look, word and action exhibited intelligence, superior penetration and calculation.

At length, either to facilitate the action of his reasoning powers, or from motives of pleasure, he drew a cigar from his pocket, and proceeded to light it. Having accomplished this, to his evident satisfaction, he leaned back in his chair, and, for a few moments, enjoyed the fragrance of the nicotine weed in silence; then he resumed caressing his moustache, and said, very deliberately:

"This affair looks serious. I believe I am at my wits' ends, and it's a bad, bad place for me. Let me see—hum—hum; no, I'm not. Wonder if there is any chance of getting out of this fog? Hum, I hope so; at any rate, I'll go. Only one entry thus far, and that is worthless; but we shall—see."

And concluding his reflections with this, his favourite expression, he left the room, and walked on towards Lincoln's Inn Fields. Having arrived at the aforesaid place, he halted in front of Mr. Shrewder's office, threw one foot upon a low post, while the other remained upon the ground, and stood in this careless position, quietly smoking, and staring at the pedestrians with a serio-comic impudence that was refreshing to behold.

He had almost wearied of this position, and entertained serious thoughts of changing it, when he saw a boy approaching, who, as he came near, turned and proceeded on towards Mr. Shrewder's office.

"I rather like the look of that boy," muttered the eccentric individual. "He appears hungry; do most anything with a hungry boy; wonder who that letter is for?"

And, for the purpose of satisfying himself with re-

gard to this particular point, he whistled softly, and twisted his face into a comical shape.

The lad heard him; and, thinking from his looks that he must be a very funny fellow, and being desirous, as all boys are, to make the acquaintance of one of that class, he returned and asked him what he wanted.

Chalmers saw that he had made an impression, and followed it by an exhibition of comic facial contortions, that excited the risibilities of the youth to a boisterous extent; so much so, that Chalmers feared attention would be attracted towards them, and that he desired the least; so, interrupting the young man in his merriment, he said:

"Are you not hungry, my lad?"

The grip of death could not have more suddenly checked the child's laughter than did those words. He was and had been hungry; and the temporary excitement had only for a moment allayed its pangs; now it returned, and with it came an expression which touched Chalmers's heart, as the boy replied, while his over-strained nerves relaxed, and the big tears welled into his eyes.

"Yes, sir, and mother is, too!"

"Come with me, my boy, come with me," said Chalmers, in a choked voice, for his mother had long since died, and the tender emphasis which the child placed upon that dear word almost dimmed his eyes.

On they walked, neither speaking, until they arrived at a coffee-house, where, upon entering, the man ordered a private room and writing utensils. The latter were forthcoming; and, pushing them on one side, Chalmers seated the boy at a table, and gave him *carte-blanc* to order what he pleased.

With eager eyes the child perused the bill of fare, and, looking up, said confusedly:

"There are so many things that I can't choose."

"Boiled chicken—oyster sauce!" shouted Chalmers.

In a short time, the tempting viands were placed before the lad, who attacked them with a vigour which told the sad fact that he had long been a stranger to the necessities of life. When nearly finished, he seemed to have forgotten something, and in self-reproachful tones, he remarked:

"Oh, I wish mother had this. I was wicked to forget her."

"Eat, my boy, eat," answered his companion, hurriedly. "We'll see to that, never fear."

Reassured by the kind though hasty utterances, the lad did eat, and neither raised his eyes or articulated until the plate was empty.

"Now," said Chalmers, "I have business with you—who is that letter for?"

The lad looked up inquiringly, and answered, in a reserved tone:

"Richard Shrewder, Esq."

"Give it to me," continued his patron.

The boy became embarrassed and replied, in regretful tones:

"The postman charged me with it, that I might earn a few pennies. I have no right to part with it, although you have been so kind to me."

Chalmers liked that.

"The boy is honest," he thought, and then said: "I would not wrong you, but I must have that letter."

"You cannot have it, sir. It is unmanly to take advantage of the weak, and it is against the laws of England to open a stamped letter; the penalty is transportation."

Chalmers smiled.

"You are not ignorant, at all events, my young expounder; but ease your conscience by looking at that."

And he threw a document towards the lad.

The youth read it, and then replied, while a contrite expression hovered on his face:

"You can have the letter, sir; here it is. I hope you will forgive me for doubting you?"

"Certainly, you were right."

And Chalmers said no more, but became suddenly interested in running a heated knife under the folds of the envelope, which soon opened it.

"Now we shall see!" mused Chalmers, as he proceeded to read it.

As he perused the contents of the letter, which was the one Lady Beauford had professed to write to Lady Lyndon, his face became illumined, his eyes scintillated with the lights of pleasure and triumph, and he seemed to be in keen enjoyment.

The letter which called forth such unmistakable signs of admiration and appreciation from Mr. Chalmers, ran thus:

"Richard Shrewder, you are a simpleton! I thought once that you knew something, and was possessed of some keenness; but that belief is dispelled by the egregious blunder—the nearly fatal mistake—that you made in sending Joseph Kingsbury here! If you had searched the world over, you could not have found a worse one! Oh, if the language were only prolific enough for me to give you what you deserve! I am wild; nearly mad! Such an inglorious defeat; and you know the stake! Oh, that I were a man; I would whip you half to death! I cannot write, I am too angry—I am trembling. But mind, let this case be settled. I have no need to tell you of my movements; you know them. Again I charge you, fail not. It must, it shall be settled!"

(Signed) B. U. FORD."

As Mr. Henri Chalmers finished the perusal of the above exclamatory epistle, he closed one eye in a peculiar manner, threw one limb across the other with a motion of satisfaction, and then uttered a low whistle of genuine approval.

The eyes of the astonished boy had not been removed from his companion, and were now bent upon him with increasing interest.

Taking a sheet of paper and comparing it with that upon which Lady Beauford's note was written, and finding that the quality and stamp were similar, he next proceeded to compare the colour of the ink, and the texture of the pen.

"That won't do," he muttered, and rang the bell. In a moment a waiter appeared.

"Bring me a bottle of mauve writing fluid, and a pen, a little worn," commanded Chalmers.

The waiter eyed him rather curiously for an instant, and then seeing that the eccentric gentleman was not disposed to recede in his order, disappeared, and shortly returned with the articles named, which Chalmers having examined and found them all correct, next applied himself to copying the letter.

He was an expert with his pen, and an accomplished and very successful imitator of promiscuous chirography; he soon finished it and held it over the gas to dry—which he had lighted for that purpose. Then he placed the copy in the original envelope, resealed it, passed it to the boy, and told him that he might carry it to its destination, as soon as he pleased, as he had the original in his pocket.

With admiration for the shrewdness of the peculiar individual to whom he had been so lately and comically introduced, the youth placed the letter in his pocket and started to depart, when Chalmers said:

"Remember, never breathe my name or tell anyone that you know me. You are a sharp boy; it will be for your advantage to keep the right side of me. Now, go deliver that, and come back directly."

"Thank you, sir, I will," and with a thankful heart for the friend that had been raised up to him, he ran merrily away and soon reached Mr. Shrewder's office.

After ascending the long, narrow stairs, he entered the office and handed the letter to the worthy attorney, who immediately opened it, while the messenger stood watching him.

Mr. Shrewder, too intent upon his occupation, did not notice the boy, but eagerly devoured the contents of the letter. As he read, his face grew dark; and casting the epistle upon the floor with a vengeful motion, he stamped furiously upon it.

The boy darted down stairs, and ran breathlessly along the street, mentally repeating as he went the exclamation that the irate lawyer had given utterance to, that he might not forget it, and be able to quote the exact words to Chalmers.

Much fatigued and nearly out of breath, he had re-entered the room, where he found Chalmers awaiting his return.

Having recovered his natural respiration, he described the appearance of Mr. Shrewder as he perused the note, and repeated *verbatim et literatim* his exclamation; all of which the other entered upon his notebook, and thanked the boy for his observation.

"Now," said Chalmers, "we will have something for you to take home to your mother."

And verifying his words, he ordered cooked edibles to a lavish amount, and then pressing five shillings into the lad's hand, gave him his address and requested him to call.

"I can never thank you enough, sir," murmured the child, with tears in his eyes. "Mother will bless you in her prayers to-night."

And he wrung Chalmers's hand, and with a happy heart started towards his humble home.

Chalmers watched him out of sight, and then said:

"That boy is observing and informed beyond his years; he will make a good man at any rate, for he is honest and loves his mother."

And heaving a deep sigh as he breathed that name, he walked on towards his hotel.

Arriving there, he threw himself into a chair, and soliloquised:

"The work goes bravely on—to-day a point is gained. The old gentleman was correct after all; yet there is a great deal to be accomplished; we are not yet out of the fog, though it is slowly rising. When will it clear away and show us blue water and fair sailing? Time alone can tell. But, Chalmers, my boy, you can congratulate yourself upon this day's work; you have a basis now, and can build upon it. Oh, that question! when will it be finished? If I knew, Chalmers, I'd tell you; but I don't, and—we shall see, we shall see!"

#### CHAPTER VIII.

THREE days had passed since the events recorded in our last chapter occurred, during which time Lord and Lady Lyndon, accompanied by their daughter,

had arrived at Marion, and been most cordially received by the inmates of Beauford Castle.

Preparations for some event were progressing in the castle. Lady Beauford was superintending the packing of trunks, while Lady Alice flittered to and fro, apparently arranging articles for travelling. The servants were in active requisition; and grumbled among themselves as orders were given and then countermanded. Indeed, all was haste and flurry at the castle; and, judging from the actions of the inmates and *attaches*, it would seem that a long and arduous journey was contemplated.

Colonel Le Fontaine had been very kindly invited by Lord and Lady Beauford to accompany them to Scotland; and it was upon this question that he was ruminating as he sat in the arbour in the park, with his head resting upon his hands, and an expression of indecision and perplexity upon his features.

"Again," he mused, "again last night, while the moon was at its full, I distinctly saw that white-robed figure rise slowly from the battlement of yonder castle, and glide along until it reached the turret, then it paused and seemed to waver in the midnight breeze. In an instant a light flashed and burst into a blaze; simultaneously a long, white arrow was gradually raised, until it seemed that the forefinger pointed directly at me. I felt a thrilling sensation of sublime awe creep through my frame, and turned my head to recover my equanimity. Once more I looked and it was gone; and, with many strange and conflicting thoughts, I retired."

"I could not have slept an hour when I was awakened by a gentle pressure upon my left hand. I raised my eyes, and beheld at my left side the same apparition that greeted me upon my first night's repose under this roof; but this time the face was black, like that of a dead person. I shuddered, and eagerly watched the movements of the ghastly personage. It examined my wrist, and then bending forward, gently unlocked my night-dress, and gazed upon my neck; while, no thought of the hand that touched, and the body was shaken by some violent commotion."

"I could no longer lay quiet, and arose upon my elbow; when, like a flash of light, the object vanished, and I was alone." For some moments he was silent, and then continued: "What portends the presence of these unnatural visitors—why do they seek me? There seems to be mystery in the very air here, and Lady Beauford is the most mysterious of all. Although she treats me very kindly and seems to like me, yet her eyes, ever restless, are often fixed upon me with a peculiar glance, and one that to me seems significant, though deep and impermeable. I wish—"

At that moment he raised his eyes, and saw Lady Mary Lyndon approaching.

She was a very pretty and captivating young lady; her manner being metropolitan, and rather coquetish. Tripping lightly over the ground, she advanced, and, lifting her finger with mock reproach, gaily exclaimed:

"Ah, you truant cavalier! Lady Alice has been long waiting for you, while you sit here and indulge in morbid musings. What have you to say for yourself, sir?"

"That the solitude experienced is amply repaid by the pleasure of Lady Mary's company back to the castle."

"As Lady Beauford says," rejoined Lady Mary, accepting his arm, "you are an eloquent speaker and understand the vulnerable points of weak, female human nature."

The colonel was quite astonished to see the large family carriage before the door, occupied by Lords Beauford and Lyndon and their respective ladies, while, at the side, upon a fine bay gelding, sat Lady Alice, and a few feet in the background stood Franco, holding his master's steed, all saddled and bridled.

Lady Beauford, who had noticed the puzzled expression upon the colonel's features, laughed merrily and said:

"Come, colonel, mount your horse; Lady Alice awaits your escort."

"Your pardon, Lady Alice," he said, lifting his hat; "had I been warned of this hasty departure, I should have been more prompt."

Lady Alice inclined her head with a pleasant smile; and, after assisting Lady Mary into her carriage, the colonel leaped gracefully into the saddle, rode forward to his fair companion's side, and the cavalcade moved on.

The journey to Scotland was a very pleasant one, uninterrupted by any annoying event until when within a few miles of Lord McGregor's castle, and nearly at the end of their route.

As the sun began to sink behind the western hills, gilding the gray clouds that spotted the horizon with golden rays, they entered a thick forest. The guide, Lady Alice, and Colonel Le Fontaine formed the advance, the carriage and its occupants made up the centre, while Franco, along with two other servants, composed the rear.

As they emerged from the wood, the colonel's eyes

rested upon a queer object in the path before him. As he drew nearer he beheld what appeared to be an aged woman, her form enveloped in a long, black cloak, while her head was covered with a hood of curious shape, which rendered it impossible to obtain a side view of her face. She seemed quite feeble and infirm, and hobbled slowly along upon a knotted staff, which she tightly grasped in her right hand.

She heeded not the passage of the equestrians, nor even raised her eyes; but, when the carriage arrived opposite, she lifted her cane and beckoned the driver to stop.

"Wait a minute," observed Lord Beauford, from a mere sense of curiosity.

The vehicle halted. Raising her seamed and wrinkled face, which was shaded by threads of long, straggling gray hair and heavy eyebrows, under which gleamed orbs strangely brilliant for one of her advanced age, she drew near to the carriage, and said:

"Lords and ladies, good and kind, will one of you let me tell your lives, past and future?"

"If you want money, you shall have it," replied Lord Lyndon; "but it is already late, and our time is limited."

"Very good, my lord," assented Lady Beauford; "it is better that we proceed."

At the onset of the lady's voice, struck upon the woman's ear, she started; a horrible expression passed over her withered features; her eyes snapped, and she said, in an insinuating, sarcastic voice:

"I tell you of the past, of future, my noble lady?"

Lady Beauford's cheeks paled, and she bit her lip to hide her perturbation. She knew not the boldness, yet something in the tone and glance caused a shiver to run over her frame; but with forced calmness she replied:

"Neither; I have no faith in your revelations or prophecies."

At this juncture, Lady Alice and her companion galloped up to ascertain the cause of the halt.

Raising her eyes to the features of the young officer, the old crone queried:

"Shall I tell you marvellous things, young sir?"

The colonel dismounted, and laughingly rejoined:

"I have no objection; which hand?"

"The left," she answered, in creaking tones.

Lady Beauford's heart dashed against her side, as she saw the soldier stretch forth his hand.

The woman took his white fingers between her horny palms, and pushed back the coat sleeve. As she did so, she uttered a shriek of mingled joy and pain, and, dropping her stick, she fell upon her knees and covered his hand with kisses, meantime trembling violently and uttering unintelligible words.

"Why these wild actions, woman? what mean you?" demanded the colonel, in an angry tone; the blood rushing to his face as he thought of the dreadful contingency which her words and motions seemed to imply.

"Pardon me, my lord, pardon me; it is nothing. Now, I will tell thy destiny. A cloud hangs over thy life, even as the heavens are now darkened—"

"Indeed they are," interrupted Lord Beauford; "and we must wait no longer, for we have yet far to go."

The fortune-teller paid no attention to his words, but continued:

"Danger hovers o'er thy path; there is a serpent in paradise. Beware! for I have warned you."

As the woman spoke the last words, she glanced at Lady Beauford, who, as she saw the meaning light that flickered in that bright yet aged eye, frowned darkly; and, inwardly trembling, peremptorily ordered the coachman to proceed.

The carriage rolled by; and, disengaging his hand from the grasp of the boldness, the colonel placed some money in her hand, and, mounting his horse, joined Lady Alice, and both rode forward.

"Colonel," said Lady Alice, "how very strange and excited that woman appeared while looking at your hand."

"She did, and, as unnecessary as it was unaccountable, it quite provoked me."

They had now reached the carriage, when, as she saw the soldier, Lady Beauford inquired:

"Does your destiny please you, colonel?"

"I have not heard it yet," he rejoined, a little petulantly. "As to the random words of your crazy woman, they have not a feather's weight."

"She seemed to be affectionate at all events," continued Lady Beauford, with a slight tinge of irony in her tone.

Turning his clear, black eyes directly upon her, the colonel replied, in a low, ringing voice:

"I suppose, my lady, that an exhibition from your old woman of either love or hatred, irrespective of persons to whom it was addressed, would be, at the best, meaningless."

The purple-black eyes flashed and drooped, and Lady Beauford was silenced.



"She told one truth," observed Lord Beauford, "for even now the heavens are overcast with dark clouds, a verification of her words that a storm hovered o'er us; we must increase our speed, lest we are overtaken by it."

"The aspect of the heavens is indeed portentous," added the colonel, glancing uneasily around, and urging his horse to greater speed.

For some time the party kept steadily on with increased velocity; but none speaking, for all were occupied with their thoughts, especially the colonel and Lady Alice, both of whom were sadly yet angrily meditative, though their respective emotions proceeded from causes widely different.

Presently they entered a narrow defile, on the left of which was a ravine, and on the right, thick copse-wood.

The clouds, which had been gathering from all points of the horizon, now formed one unbroken mass of murky vapour, stretching from the zenith to the horizon, and soon emitted drops of rain; while the wind sprang up and whistled mournfully through the trees.

With the keen perception of one accustomed to all climes and kinds of weather, Colonel Le Fontaine saw that it was no temporary shower that threatened them, but the forerunner of a tempest; and, turning to Lady Alice, he said, in a tone of gentle command:

"Dear Lady, you had better dismount and take shelter in the carriage, before the storm bursts upon us."

She was well assured by his manner that it would be futile to refuse; and, although she would rather have remained with him, she assented, and he helped her from her horse, and assisted her into the carriage. He was hardly firm in his saddle ere the rain descended in volumes; the thunder boomed through the heavens, and echoed and re-echoed through the ravines with a startling, frightful sound; while the wind increased in strength and power, and howled dimly.

"Now for action!" mused the colonel; and putting spurs to his steed, he dashed forward and ascended the guide with:

"Why do you not proceed, sir? We must get to a place of safety!"

"We have taken the wrong path," mumbled the guide; "we must return."

"Wrong road, fellow? where are your senses?" exclaimed the colonel, with exasperation. "How is the carriage to be turned in this place?"

"The horses must be taken off and the gentlemen must alight," growled the guide.

"I believe that man is a traitor and the old woman was right," mused the soldier, as he galloped back; while the rain beat furiously upon him, and the thunder caused the very air to tremble.

Arriving at the carriage, he found everything in confusion; the horses, alarmed by the roar of the elements and the blinding floods, had become perfectly intractable, and were struggling wildly to break away; while the driver was clinging to the reins with the strength of desperation; and the ladies inside, panic-stricken, were shrieking with affright, and vainly attempting to force open the doors.

The eagle eye of the daring soldier took in the position of affairs at a glance, and, calling hastily to the servants, he dismounted, and, with their help, immediately detached the furious animals, passing long enough to speak words of encouragement and comfort to the ladies, whose nerves were unstrung, and all, with the exception of Lady Alice, were sobbing violently. She, however, with commendable self-command, and infinite trust in the great power that ruled the storm, had remained quiet; and, as the colonel opened the door, she said, lowly:

"Do be very careful. I have a strange presentiment that you are in danger."

Her kind tones made sweet music on his ear, and filled his heart with joy; and, passionately pressing her hand, he murmured:

"Dear lady, a thousand thanks for your gentle solicitude. Fear not; I am used to positions of peril." Then addressing the gentlemen, he continued, in his usual tone of voice: "My lords, your assistance will be necessary to turn the vehicle."

"Turn the carriage!" exclaimed Lady Lyndon, in frightened tones. "Are we obliged to go back? Oh, hear the storm! See that flash—dear dear, we shall all be killed!"

With as little trouble as possible, Lord Beauford and Lyndon alighted, and, by the united strength of the males of the party, the carriage was reversed, and the horses were again attached.

The storm had not in the least abated, but grew in power and intensity. The hailstones flew hissing through the air like bullets; the wind, which had become a hurricane, tore trees from the earth, and rushed over the mountains and through the ravines with wild, groaning sounds, aided by the thunder which roared terrifically and seemed to shake the

earth; while the vivid lightnings darted o'er the ground in forked rays, for an instant exposing to view a frightful chasm, and lighting it up with a crimson glare, then striking a mighty tree with a resounding shock, and hurling its fragments far and wide; while the night owl flutteringly coursed the air, uttering its weird notes of alarm, and the tempest grew in fury, and nature itself seemed to be a pandemonium, where confusion, terror, destruction, were omnipotent.

With a servant at the head of each horse, while the driver, though drenched to the skin, still clutched the reins with an iron grasp, the carriage moved slowly along.

Darting from one point to another, cool and collected, though deeply in earnest, went Colonel Le Fontaine, giving his orders in clear, ringing tones that rose above nature's din, and inspired courage in the perturbed breast of Lady Alice, upon whose mind began to dawn a faint perception that the image of the daring soldier was enshrined in her heart.

"There is a house beyond the forest!" shouted the colonel, as he dashed by. "I will go forward and obtain shelter."

"He is a brave, worthy man, and a thorough soldier," commented Lord Beauford, as the last echo of the officer's voice died away.

"He is, indeed!" assented Lady Beauford, in tremulous tones; while, from some hidden emotion, a pallor crept across her cheek.

Cautiously the vehicle proceeded; until the forest was entered, passed, and neared the cottage, from which gleamed a bright light, a welcome beacon to the tempest-tossed and benighted travellers.

Riding ahead, Franco dismounted, and knocked upon the door, which was immediately opened by a grizzled man, who inquired, in a loud, gruff voice, what was wanted.

When informed, he reluctantly replied that he supposed he could give them a place; by the fire, which he had made to dry his own clothing, and as the air was quite chilly.

"I suppose my master is inside?" said the valet.

"Your master?" repeated the man, with coarse comeliness. "I reckon there's none here but I."

"What! not here?" queried the faithful fellow, in tones of surprise; and then, walking a few steps, he shouted: "Colonel! Colonel Le Fontaine!"

But no answer greeted the ears of the anxious listener, save the hollow echo of his own voice, blended with the roar and whistle of the storm.

Somewhat alarmed, and cogitating apprehensively with regard to his whereabouts, Franco rushed back to the carriage, and, in spasmodic utterances, gave the startling information that Colonel Le Fontaine had not called at the cottage, and was missing.

As the dreadful intelligence smote the ear of the lovely Lady Alice, her cheek paled, and her heart widely fluttering seemed to rise to her lips and hold her speechless, while her mind was filled with harrowing conjectures; and she only regained her equanimity by offering up a silent prayer to the Protector of all, to guard and watch over him who was lost; and yet, in the midst of these emotions, she realised not that she loved.

If Lady Beauford's face could have been seen, as this fact was made known to her, it would have been painful to behold; her heart gave one bound, but she was actuated by far different feelings than those which assailed her daughter; then her being resumed its wonted frigidity and rigidity of action, and again she was Lady Beauford, self-possessed and implacable.

The party alighted from the carriage and entered the house, where they were welcomed in a gruff manner by the occupant. The ladies were provided with rough seats near the fire, and the gentlemen were obliged to content themselves by standing or walking, as their inclination might prompt.

A long, weary, dismal night was that to Lady Alice.

Often she directed her pensive eyes towards the window, where stood faithful Franco, anxiously awaiting the sound of his master's voice, on the tread of his feet; but neither came to cheer the spirit of the honest fellow, or lift the load of grief that was pressing heavily upon the devoted heart of the loving maid.

As the hours slowly dragged away, and the suspense became more tantalising, fearful conjectures forced themselves upon the agitated mind of Lady Alice, and she slowly came to the realisation that she loved: it was a sad, happy, painful, yet beautiful knowledge; sad, because the object had vanished as the divine feeling sprang into existence; happy, for it engendered new life; painful, as its consummation seemed hopeless, even if the dreadful suppositions which had arisen in her mind proved untrue; beautiful, for it seemed to enoble and purify her being, and open a new and brighter life.

At last, morning came, with the bright sun lighting up the earth and making lovely the same places,

which the night before were howling abodes of terror. At an early hour the party resumed the road, and, after a safe and pleasant journey, arrived at their destination.

The party were most cordially welcomed by the genial Scotch lord, who listened to their story with sad interest, expressed great sympathy in the loss they had sustained, and immediately dispatched his hussamen far and wide, to search for the missing soldier.

That day was one of agonising suspense to Lady Alice; and every moment those terrible questions forced themselves upon her aching mind—will he be found, and, oh, heaven, will he be alive? These agitating thoughts, combined with the indifferent manner which she was obliged to assume to confute any suppositions that might enter her mother's mind, nearly drove the suffering girl distracted.

At night, the party returned; and, with blanched cheek, Lady Alice listened to those words, that sent a thrill of anguish to her heart:

"He is not to be found!"

(To be continued.)

## ADELICIA.

BY THE

Author of "The Beauty of Paris," "Wild Redburn," &c.

### CHAPTER IX.

SIR BLAIZE had not offered to introduce Lord Charles to the veiled lady, though the nobleman had twice glanced towards him as if he desired his accustomed aid in such affairs. Sir Blaize, in truth, had already recognised her, and had no desire that Lord Charles should see her face. He knew very well, after a keen study of the strange lady's form and manner that she was not Adelia Louvaine. He was amazed, too, because Lord Charles had not also recognised this fact.

Lord Charles was so intently bent upon his purpose to remove by force or by flattery the veil which hid, as he believed, the face of the original of the picture which had fired his soul with passion that he failed to perceive that Sir Blaize was greatly agitated and much disturbed.

It was plain that the lady had no desire to yield to the solicitations of the nobleman, but he seized one of her hands as if to restrain it while he reached forward to snatch aside her veil. She struggled to release the imprisoned hand, and in the struggle her glove was drawn off, revealing a beautiful, though somewhat large, hand, of exquisite shape and whiteness.

Scarcely had Lord Charles had time to remark the beauty of that hand when, with the rapidity of light, it dealt him a stinging blow with its palm upon his beardless face, making him reel in his saddle.

The suddenness, violence, and unexpectedness of this blow caused the astounded nobleman to release his grasp upon her bridle; and the lady, with the boldness of a practised rider, wheeled her horse, and spurring him at the high hedge which bordered the road, leaped over it and was out of sight in a moment.

Her servant made an attempt to follow her, but a gesture from Sir Blaize checked him just as he was about to force his horse to leap the hedge.

"Rascal!" exclaimed Lord Charles, eager to vent his rage upon the servant, since the mistress had chastised his impertinence, and riding angrily towards him—"Rascal, try to escape, and I will run you through as I would a thiefing fox! Speak—who was that—that person? Certainly not Mistress Adelia Louvaine?"

"No, your honour," replied the servant, who had a grim and surly face as well as a powerfully-built form.

"This is Lord Charles Gray," said Sir Blaize, as his eye caught that of the man. "Take care that you do not lie in answering him."

"Oh, this is Lord Charles, be it?" exclaimed the man, affecting great humility. "I be main sorry that my mistress did not know that, for she is partial to the attention of great people."

"Who is she?" demanded Lord Charles.

"She is a widow lady, my lord, and does not reside hereabouts," replied the man. "She has been up here on a visit to the old battle-ground a few miles away, and was on her return to York."

"You are speaking falsely, fellow," said Lord Charles, "for your horse and hers are fresh, nor have you any luggage."

"Aye, but the luggage and all that is at a cottage some ten miles adown the road, where my mistress's maid is waiting for us."

"But you have not told me her name, you rascal."

"She might not like it if I told you her name, after that blow she gave your lordship," replied the man, with a grin. "Mayhap she would give me a ration

or two of that kind of provender if I tell her name. I may venture to say she is fifty years old and—"

"What!" exclaimed Lord Charles, "fifty years old, and with that form and hand!"

"Oh, my mistress do pride herself in her goodly shape, which be graceful enough to make amends for her being blind in one eye—"

"Blind in one eye!"

"I am wrong, your lordship, since she has but one eye, the other being gone. Then she should have a fair hand to make amends for a hare-lip and—"

"A hare-lip!" gasped Lord Charles, in dismay. "Have I been struck by an old one-eyed woman, with a hare-lip? S'death! It is no wonder that she wears a veil and refuses to show her face."

"Oh, as for that, my lord, her nose is as red as a beetroot, and then the small-pox has—"

"Silence! Here is a crown for you, knave," said Lord Charles, in a tone of chagrin and disgust; "but if ever I hear that you speak of this affair, or mention my name in connection with it, I will have you pounded to a jelly. Come, Sir Blaize, let us ride on."

He spurred his horse angrily, and as the animal bounded away, he did not perceive that Sir Blaize remained behind to exchange a few words with the man, while his four followers rode on.

"What means this?" demanded Sir Blaize, when the men were beyond hearing.

"Didn't I stuff his ears finely, Sir Blaize?" replied the man, as a wide grin expanded his grim and surly mouth. "Mayhap, though, my lady may want to have me tossed in a blanket for what I said—"

"Peace, man! I have no time to waste here!" cried Sir Blaize, impatiently. "Why is she in this neighbourhood?"

"Oh, she heard you and Lord Charles were coming hither, and she found out that it was the fame of Mistress Adelia Louvaine's beauty that had set my lord's heart all aflame. So nothing would content her but coming here to see for herself if the maiden had more beauty than herself."

"That cannot be, Reuben, for she despises Lord Charles."

"That may be, Sir Blaize, but she knows that he loved her once, and though she never cared a farthing for him personally, she seems to fear that he will become infatuated with some other lady. Though, to tell the truth, Sir Blaize, I never could fathom a woman's whims. Sometimes I think she loves Lord Charles, and then again I think she would as soon murder him as not. If I were not afraid of saying too much I might say more."

The man turned his cold, gray eyes steadily upon the face of the knight as he spoke, as if half unwilling to say more, and eager, too, to speak his thoughts.

"Come, out with it, Reuben," exclaimed Sir Blaize. "I know that all you have given as a reason for her presence near Stepmore Retreat is idle fancy or invention of yours. Was it to see Adelia Louvaine that she left London?"

"If she learn that I have said anything about her reasons for coming into this neighbourhood she would as soon stab me as look at me. Your worship knows her temper, and it was that same temper that frightened away all the love Lord Charles ever had for her—scared it out of his very soul before he had been—"

"Silence!" broke in Sir Blaize, sharply, darting his keen, small eyes around him, as if he feared others might be near. "Have I not warned you never to so much as hint of a certain fact until your evidence shall have been demanded by law? Keep your tongue from that matter, and speak boldly upon any other subject."

"Your worship then will promise never to tell my mistress that I have told you my suspicions, Sir Blaize?"

"Of course, and swear to keep my promise, Reuben. What is it that you suspect?"

"First, that my mistress regrets exceedingly that she and Lord Charles were—"

"Take care!" cried Sir Blaize, while his face grew scarlet with anger. "If you are as careless in speaking to others as you are in talking with me, I think I had best turn you over to those who have been looking for you for a very long time."

"They will find me some day—never fear," replied the man, in a gloomy tone, while his face grew ghastly white and his powerful frame trembled, or rather shuddered, violently. "Twelve years is a long time for a man to live in hourly fear of having his throat cut. But there'll be an end some day, and mayhap there'll be an end for ever; though, do you know, Sir Blaize, that I fear what is to come after they have done for me—and I am as sure as I live that their coming is not far off—I fear meeting her in the other world, though no doubt she is in heaven. For she will bear witness that my hands did the accursed deed and—"

"Talk sense, you frightened idiot!" exclaimed Sir Blaize, sharply. "I have told you often, Reuben

Maybold, that your wandering speech will betray you some day to those who have sworn to take your life. Your face is dark enough to have a prudent tongue in your head. But ramble, if you will, in your vapourings over what others made you do, yet take care how you betray anything of mine. Why twice, since I began to question you, you were upon the point of blurring out an important secret. If to me, there is great danger that you will do so to others."

"No, your worship," replied the man, earnestly. "I was going to say that my mistress regrets that she and Lord Charles were—"

"Again!" thundered Sir Blaize, fiercely.

"Were ever in sight of each other, was what I was about to say," continued the man, in a surly tone. "Your lordship snaps me up too short. Never fear, Sir Blaize, that my tongue will ever betray your secret, while the head it wags in is at your mercy." In thought he added: "And it would not long be at your mercy, could I dare to stain my hands again with such blood as runs in your veins. They say there is royal blood in your heart, and heaven knows there is too much of that reddening my hands now."

"Regrets that she ever saw Lord Charles!" exclaimed Sir Blaize, in amazement. "She never had but one great passion, and that is ambition. Perhaps she aims higher than to be a duchess," he added, with a sneer.

"She has a right to do so, since she is the daughter of one who is the son of a king," said Reuben Maybold, gazing steadily into the eyes of Sir Blaize.

"Easy, easy, good Reuben," replied the knight, who seemed greatly pleased by the insinuation, or rather by the assertion, as it was meant that he, Sir Blaize Thornleigh, was of the blood royal. "That she is my daughter, Lord Charles must never suspect until I be ready to claim—ahem!" He checked his speech with a cough, and then added, with a laugh: "Faith! I was about to utter the very secret I feared you would betray, Reuben. But in truth, Reuben, while I rather desire that you shall, on all fit occasions, give it forth that I am of the blood royal of the noble Tudor line, and not the son of old Norris Thornleigh, who was made a knight by the late king—my father, I might say, ahem!—for wedding my mother. Never hint that your mistress is my daughter. You learned that secret by accident, you know, and may class it with the other one thus—very dangerous to tell. You know what I mean."

"Your lordship need not threaten me. I am sure it is wholly to my interest, my very vitality, to serve you, Sir Blaize," answered Maybold, in the tone which seemed so in unison with his surly face. "I can scarcely heap more guilt upon my head in serving you than my hands have already laid upon my soul. It is a year now since you placed me in the service of my mistress, and I had not been three days there, Sir Blaize, when I overheard a conversation between you and her, from which I learned that she was your daughter; yet, even she, unless your worship has seen fit to tell her, does not suspect that I know her."

"You have been very discreet, Reuben, and when all is completed to my satisfaction, I will reward you well."

"By giving me up to those who will slay me," thought Reuben, bitterly. "But it is Fate, and I cannot escape. While I am needed by him, he will shield me, no doubt, and I must see that he shall require me all his life."

"But of what you said, Reuben," continued the knight, inquisitively. "Your mistress has no heart, except for the promptings of ambition. Is not the fair prospect of being a duchess sufficient for her ambition? Does she aim still higher? I have nothing to say against such a laudable desire; but she must take one, and only one, step at a time. Faith!" he cried, "it will be a long step from where she is to where I intend she shall be; and it was no short nor easy step that carried her from what she was to that which she is. She must curb her ambition, and when I see her, I shall tell her so."

"Sir Blaize," replied Maybold, in a low voice, "it is not ambition that has made her regret her acquaintance with Lord Charles. It is love."

"Love!" exclaimed Sir Blaize, and then breaking into a loud and scornful laugh. "Love—Reuben, you are an idiot! Love! The idea that Molina Maudstone could love, as some silly women do, is an absurdity! Why, man, she has no heart for anything except wealth and rank. How could she, when, from childhood, I have taught her to believe that life has nothing worth striving for that wealth and rank cannot gain. When I have instilled into her very soul, that without wealth and rank everything else is a mockery, a slavery, a humiliation! Love! Do you suppose that I have not taken care to mould her exactly to my will, when, since Lord Charles was a mere boy, and she a mere child, I had the purpose in my mind which I am about to see accom-

plished. Reuben, I gave you credit for being a man of sound penetration and prudence. I am sorry to see that you are such a simpleton."

"That may be, your worship, since men far greater than I have been set down under the same name," replied Maybold, bluntly. "Yet I say my mistress is in love, and that as madly as any damsel ever was."

"Do you pretend that she is in love with Lord Charles, and that jealousy of the reported beauty of Adelia Louvaine has led her to hover around Stepmore Retreat?"

"Not at all, Sir Blaize. I think she despises Lord Charles."

"Then what is this love of which you speak?"

"Love for Sir Bertram Stepmore," replied Maybold.

"You are mad, Reuben Maybold," said Sir Blaize, after a stare at the grim face of the speaker.

"Mad!" echoed Maybold, with a fierce sneer, "mad, indeed! No, Sir Blaize, I am not mad, though I may be possessed with a fiend."

"A very silly one, Reuben, if you believe your mistress has been led hither by love. It may be curiosity that has prevented her, for no woman is devoid of a peering imp in that guise. Love Sir Bertram Stepmore? Why, she has never seen him, has she? When? Where?"

"She has seen him in London, and in Ireland, too, Sir Blaize."

"Are you speaking the truth, Maybold?" demanded the knight in surprise.

"I am, upon my solemn faith, Sir Blaize. Perhaps it is base in me to betray to anyone the secret passion of my mistress—"

"Not at all, man, since you are employed by me, and not by your mistress."

"Must I ever be a woman-betrayer?" muttered Maybold, as his bronzed face grew paler than usual.

"Cease your muttering, fellow!" said Sir Blaize, angrily. "Tell me all. Where did Molina Maudstone first see this Sir Bertram Stepmore?"

"I was not in her service when she first met him," replied Maybold. "The manner of their first meeting I learned from gossip."

"Gossip, sir; but in this case gossip has been proved true. Nearly a year and a half ago, a few weeks after that which you say I must never mention had taken place, Sir Bertram Stepmore was thrown from his horse, just at the door of the house in which my mistress resided, and falling upon his head, was badly hurt. He was carried into the house, and there taken care of for more than a week."

"He!" interrupted Sir Blaize, scowling. "There is truth in what you say, Reuben. I have heard her speak of the accident as having happened to some of the followers of the Earl of Essex, but she spoke slightly of the matter, and said it was a pity that the sorry rider did not break his neck."

"It was to deceive you that she so spoke," continued Maybold. "The fall of Sir Bertram was the fault of the street, which sank just where it did, under the weight of the horse, there being an old collar beneath it. He was stunned by the fall, nor was he able to mount a horse again for several days—bruises on his shoulder made him prisoner in the house into which he had been borne. He was attended by Mistress Molina. That was the first meeting, and my mistress conceived an ardent love for him then and there."

"Did Sir Bertram perceive that she did so?"

"Your worship knows that my mistress is too proud to have permitted him to perceive it so soon."

"So soon! Then he knows it now, does he? Has he, in turn, loved her? Has he wooed her?" exclaimed Sir Blaize, whose tone expressed great uneasiness.

"I do not know whether he has discovered that my mistress loves him—"

"Stay," cried Sir Blaize, impatiently. "How did you discover that she loved him?"

"Soon after your worship placed me in the service of my mistress, she bade me accompany her to Ireland, and to keep the matter secret from every one."

"But where obtained she the money to pay the expenses of the journey?" broke in Sir Blaize.

"From a certain person named Aaron Ramorset."

"Now may that meddling fellow be cursed," roared Sir Blaize. "But in heaven's name, man, how is it that Aaron Ramorset advanced money to Molina Maudstone, who has not an acre of land to pledge as security? Did she feign love for him?"

"I cannot say what a woman will not do to achieve a purpose, Sir Blaize. I only know that she obtained a good round sum from Aaron Ramorset, and used it to visit Ireland. What her purpose was I cannot say, farther than that it was partly to see Sir Bertram, and, no doubt, win his love."

"Then Sir Bertram saw and spoke with her in Ireland?"



"No, he did not, Sir Blaize, though she saw him. She was at the time deeply veiled, as she was just now. But at the time Sir Bertram was walking with Lord Charles, and no sooner did my mistress recognise the latter, than she said to me, in a voice of angry bitterness—'Reuben, we will return to England this very hour.' And we set forth upon our return immediately."

"Ah," said Sir Blaize, with a laugh. "She knew that Lord Charles would recognise her, and imagined that he would speak to Sir Bertram of what he knew and could tell of her. She was wrong, for Lord Charles would be glad to see her wedded to any man, and of all men in the world, to Sir Bertram Stepmore. On her return to England, how did she act?"

"For days and weeks she wept and remained listless by turns. She was sometimes sad, sometimes violent. She visited this neighbourhood and in disguise made many inquiries concerning Sir Bertram among the farmers and yeomen hereabout. She did this shrewdly, so that no remark was made, nor any attention drawn to the fact that her sole purpose was to learn whether Sir Bertram were heart-free or not. She learned only that in the home of Sir Bertram there dwelt a maiden of most rare beauty and virtue, the adopted daughter of Master Richard Stepmore; that Master Richard Stepmore cherished this maiden with dotting love, and was as careful of her as of the apple of his eye; that many thought Master Stepmore was rearing the maiden to be the wife of his beloved son, Sir Bertram, who was away in the Irish wars. But no one could tell her that which she longed to know—whether Sir Bertram and the maiden were plighted lovers, nor even that they loved each other at all."

"No doubt they spoke their love with their eyes only," said Sir Blaize.

"That may be, Sir Blaize, for lovers' eyes are more eloquent than their tongues. The maiden said to be so fair, my mistress did not see when she made her first visit to this country, nor when she came again, for Mistress Adelia Louvaine did not stir abroad, or was away from home."

"You said that your mistress had learned of the coming of Lord Charles."

"Yes, Sir Blaize, for he boasted in London that he was going to see if the beauty of Stepmore Retreat were as fair as he had heard she was, and his words reached her ears."

"He is silly when he prates of his love affairs," said Sir Blaize, "though in other matters he is shrewd enough. Has your mistress yet seen this great beauty?"

"She saw her to-day; met her as Mistress Adelia Louvaine was riding out."

"Ah, then you saw her also? Is she as fair as they said?"

"Sir Blaize, these eyes have never seen a more beautiful lady, and I have wandered over half the world—wandered ever to return to England, impelled by some resistless, invisible, indescribable power—"

"There, don't go wandering from the subject before us," cried Sir Blaize sharply. "What opinion, think you, your love-sick mistress formed of the maiden's beauty?"

"I cannot tell; and as for that, as my mistress was veiled I could not see her features as she gazed upon that angelic face. Angelic and holy in its purity of loveliness it was, Sir Blaize. She, the beauty of Stepmore Retreat, rode past us at an easy canter, mounted upon a noble palfrey, that an earl's daughter might covet, and clad in costly satin a queen might not disdain; her peerless complexion blending rose and lily and her soft red lips wearing a smile such as—"

"Faith!" exclaimed Sir Blaize, "I begin to imagine that you have been struck love-mad at first sight."

"Sir Blaize," said Maybold, and his voice sunk nearly to a whisper, "she is the living embodiment of a picture that hangs in the royal palace of France, a picture said to be the exact image at the time when it was painted, of one whose face, older and sadder grown, haunts my dreams by night, and starts up before my eyes by day."

"Bah!" exclaimed Sir Blaize, in a harsh and sneering voice, "Reuben Maybold, you are haunted by a Phantom Queen."

"I am, I am!" cried Maybold, in a tone full of misery. "And to-day I have seen the living image of that Phantom Queen in this Adelia Louvaine."

#### CHAPTER X.

SIR BLAIZE gazed upon Reuben Maybold with an eye in which there was both anger and alarm.

"I fear this fellow is going mad," he muttered, for there was still sufficient light reflected from the sun-gilded clouds to reveal the wildness of the man's eye and face. "I knew not that his remorse for his deed so preyed upon his soul. By my faith,

he seems to fear the dead more than he does the living."

"Three blows, three blows!" said Maybold, speaking his torturing thoughts aloud, though not as if he knew he was framing those thoughts into speech. "My courage failed, my limbs became weak, my brain reeled—the sobs and groans of those who stood near appalled me. Not the deed I was about to do for gold—"

"Madman!" exclaimed Sir Blaize, as he grasped Maybold's arm, "do you often indulge in this madness? Do you forget that there are a score of dangers ever gleaming upon your path, in the hands of men who have sworn never to rest until they shall have avenged the death of Mary, Queen of the Scots? They have not found you yet, but they will, and very speedily, if you give way to such fits of folly. Reflect, man, that of all those who touched the person of royal Mary on the scaffold upon which you slew her, not one now remains alive, except yourself, and that you are the man whom the queen's avengers are most eager to capture."

"They can but kill me, Sir Blaize," replied Maybold, gloomily.

"Think you that they will be contented with—simply taking your life, Reuben Maybold?" retorted Sir Blaize, sneeringly. "If there be any efficacy in the curses and anathemas in the petitions of those who loved Mary Stuart, your soul has nought but eternal torture and perdition before it in the other world. Nor will the death the avengers will decree you be sudden and easy. Three blows you say, you struck with—your executioner's axe upon the royal neck, and so say all who witnessed the deed; but ten thousand times three blows will Mary's avengers deal upon your living, writhing body, ere death shall come to your relief."

"Why do they not strike at Elizabeth, Queen of England?" asked Maybold, bitterly. "Elizabeth ordered the deed to be done. She hated Queen Mary, and the deed was hers. I was but the instrument of the ferocious daughter of the old wife-beheading Henry Tudor. Why pursue me and not slay the Queen of England?"

"Because she is the Queen of England," replied Sir Blaize, haughtily. "So speak no treason in my presence, nor aught against the late king, whom I am your father. But never act so foolishly again, and I will continue to be your friend, and set those would-be assassins upon a false scent as I did before."

"Accursed while I live, accursed after my death! Wretch that I am," muttered Maybold. "What is there in life to live for, except to defer the unknown doom of the grave? It does not matter. If I fail to be this man's slave he will betray me to the avengers of Queen Mary. Does he come here to aid Lord Charles in villainous schemes against Adelia Louvaine—against this most lovely and innocent maiden who so much resembles Queen Mary, and yet whose beauty is still purer and fairer than that of the murdered queen? And my mistress, this daring and desperate-hearted Molina Maudstone, does she intend aught harmful against the beauty of Stepmore Retreat?"

"Come!" ejaculated Sir Blaize. "If I tarry here much longer, night will be upon me, and I may lose my way, for I know nothing of the country here. Lord Charles must think it strange that I remain from his company so long. What are the intentions of your mistress? Will she remain near Stepmore Retreat, or return to London?"

"I cannot say, Sir Blaize. I think, however, that she will remain until the return of Sir Bertram from Ireland, and that should he regard her with loving eyes, or she detect anything in his air, looks or language, upon which she can possibly build a hope of winning his love, she will remain in this vicinity for many a day. And then again, Sir Blaize, should she discover that Sir Bertram and Mistress Adelia Louvaine are plighted lovers, or that there is aught of love between them, she may linger here to create hate or dislike. Your worship knows her nature well."

"Aye, she will go headlong to destruction to win a whim," exclaimed Sir Blaize. "She will permit no one to drive her if once she suspects there exists any intention to sway her contrary to her will. I wonder often that I have done so well with her in my plans. I am vexed to the very soul to learn that she has turned idiot and fallen in love. She and Lord Charles are a pair of simpletons alike. Pest take the ill-luck that did not make them love each other. I believe he did for a time love her as well as he can ever love anything except himself; but what pleases him to-day is sure to displease him to-morrow, nor have I ever known the fickle-hearted fellow to fix his fancy upon any fair face a second time, when once he had tired of it or found another to please his inconstant taste. So there is no hope that he will ever again love Molina Maudstone; and as for her,

if indeed she has been so weak as to fall in love, she will love but once and love but one for ever."

"Such is her nature, Sir Blaize; and from scraps of her written thoughts which she has from time to time left carelessly about, easy to be picked up by one who watches her as I have, I know that her whole heart, soul and mind are filled with love and admiration for Sir Bertram Stepmore."

"I thought she had more strength and prudence than to act as silly women do when in love. So she writes her love-thoughts, does she?"

"She is a woman, and has no confidant," replied Maybold. "Her feelings crave for vent, and she is too suspicious of the faith of man or woman to speak of her love."

"Or anything of importance," interrupted Sir Blaize. "I am sure I took pains enough to teach her that there was no such thing as truth, friendship, love, or fidelity in man or in woman."

"And therefore, Sir Blaize, she will not trust her secrets even to her father. So she writes as she feels, and of her love; tears up what she writes—and scatters the shreds of paper to the winds. Simply to lead my mind from the horror of my past and present—aye, and of my future, too, I have watched her; and putting together this and that, I have discovered that she hates most bitterly Lord Charles, regrets that he and she ever met, and passionately loves Sir Bertram Stepmore."

"Ride by my side, Reuben," said Sir Blaize, "for darkness is coming on fast. I wish to speak more with you before we part."

"Nay, your worship, for my mistress may learn that you and I have conversed much together, and I would not have her suspect that my tongue had spoken of her love for Sir Bertram."

"Can you persuade her to return to London, Reuben?"

"I, your honour!" exclaimed Maybold, in surprise. "Why not? Tell her that you have spoken with me; and that, as I desire to thwart this new love affair of Lord Charles, I have come hither to do all I can against it. That statement will be believed by her, for she knows why I should endeavour to keep him from any affair which may cause scandal and arouse the old duke, his father, from his lethargy of indolent ease, and cause him to fear that his son and heir may, in a moment of folly, wed beneath him; and if the duke be so aroused, he will at once command Lord Charles to marry a lady of his own rank. Lord Charles fears his father; and why, I know not. There is some deep secret between father and son, and with that secret the old duke drives his son about as he pleases."

"Tell her that I am much displeased—no, not displeased, for that word will throw her haughty spirit into rebellion as a spark explodes a mine. Tell her that I was much startled on finding that she had left the quiet retreat which I had so carefully selected for her in London. That there is danger lest Lord Charles may discover our relationship and certain other facts, which should remain unknown to him while the old duke lives—"

"My mistress will then learn that which I have kept concealed from her," interrupted Maybold. "She does not suspect that I know her to be your daughter."

"It is time that she should know, Reuben. She will then be aware that you can be trusted with any secret, no matter how important, and may confide her own to you. I am here in good truth, to keep this foolish lord from being rash and restless as is his custom. Master Stepmore is no common man, upon whose rights a noble may trample; and, if all I have heard be true, this Sir Bertram Stepmore, if he hears that Lord Charles is here to try to win Adelia Louvaine, will hurry home and cut my lord's foolish throat as quickly as he would that of a thieving cur; and then what would become of all Molina Maudstone's dreams of being a duchess ere the snow falls again; aye, and of all my years of scheme and care to make her one."

"So Sir Bertram is in Ireland still?" asked Maybold. "I heard he was soon to be at Stepmore Retreat."

"And how heard you that, Reuben?"

"I gossiped with one of Master Stepmore's servants yesterday, and he said Sir Bertram was already on his way—"

"What!" cried Sir Blaize, somewhat aghast—"already on his return! That must be a mistake."

"I only repeat that which the groom told me, your worship," replied Maybold. "He said Master Stepmore received a letter yesterday morning, and that after reading it he exclaimed, joyfully, to Mistress Adelia Louvaine:—"

"He is on his way, Adelia! Bertram has crossed the Irish channel, and is again upon English soil! He is detained a day to perform certain military duties, but he writes that he will certainly be at Stepmore Retreat before sunset to-morrow."

"And that 'to-morrow' is this day!" cried Sir Blaize. "Lord Charles may find Sir Bertram at Stepmore Retreat. This is very unfortunate. Does your mistress know of the receipt and contents of this letter you mention?"

"I think not, Sir Blaize. Of course I did not tell her, for I wish to do nothing by which I may lose your protection."

"Very right, very right," said Sir Blaize, in the tone and with the air of a pleased patron. "Where does your mistress dwell, while in this vicinity?"

"In a cottage near this road, some eight or ten miles away."

"A white cottage, with red sashed windows? the windows overhung with vines without and having blue and yellow curtains within?"

"The same, Sir Blaize."

"I faith! we made a narrow miss of it," continued Sir Blaize. "Why it was there we halted so that Lord Charles might cast off his dusty travel-stained attire and clothe himself as you saw him—in rich black velvet trimmed with silver and gold lace, with snow-white frills and fresh plumes, so as to dazzle the country beauty's eyes into love at first sight. It would have been no jesting matter had Molina Maudstone and he met. Goes she veiled always hereabout?"

"Generally, your worship."

"Have you heard that Mistress Adelia Louvain has many admirers? So fair a maiden should have a score or more ready to die for her."

"She keeps them at a distance, if she has them. Though I heard a rumour that a demand or a proposal had been made for her hand by Sir Otto Dare."

"By Sir Otto Dare!" cried Sir Blaize, in great wonder. "Why the man is an apostate, a renegade. He is old enough, by my soul, to have been her grandfather! Why, he must be nearer sixty than fifty. This country beauty must be a paragon. Sir Otto Dare! Humph, before he roamed from England he and I used to know each other. Did the maiden or Master Stepmore reject him?"

"Both, I heard, Sir Blaize, and decidedly."

"Master Stepmore must be a very bold man. It is very strange, too, for most men of his rank would be glad to unite their daughters to a knight so renowned. Few rich men would desire to wed their only son to a nameless, portionless orphan. Few ambitious young men would wish to marry the adopted daughter of their father. Why, Sir Otto, like myself—ahem! is of the blood royal. Sir Otto is of the Plantagenet line, renowned in war, very rich—so 'tis said, though I have my own opinion as to that—ambassador of Mahomet the Third—may the fiend fly away with all infidels!" added Sir Blaize, with an affection of piety.

"But," he continued, hastily, "I must hurry on. See that you do not tell your mistress that Sir Bertram is expected at Stepmore Retreat. Persuade her to go over to Ireland, with the belief that Sir Bertram is there. Heard you of late anything from Trenthamdale Castle?"

"Just before we left London, Sir Blaize, report came that the duke was never more hearty, and that he gave promise of living ten or fifteen years yet. He has suddenly and wonderfully recovered from the disease which the physicians said would carry him off, and he now bids fair to live at least half-a-score of years."

Sir Blaize gave vent to a furious oath of vexation and wonder, and did not attempt to conceal his surprise and chagrin.

"This news does not please me, nor will it please Lord Charles, who is eager to wear the ducal coronet—as eager, indeed, as I am to see it upon his head. I must hasten to lure him away from this mad love frolic, or all my plans will be spoiled. Now hasten to rejoin your mistress, and bear in mind all that I have said. She must return to London, and if she will not she must be compelled."

"Compelled, Sir Blaize?"

"Aye, why not, Reuben Maybold? At least she shall be made to disappear from this neighbourhood, if I cannot prevail upon Lord Charles to leave it forthwith. And even in that event, Molina Maudstone must not be permitted to hover around Stepmore Retreat. Not that I care the weight of a bubble for Sir Bertram, Adelia Louvain, or Master Stepmore, or their hopes and plans. But I know Molina Maudstone, and her nature is such that if all you have said be true, she will not hesitate to blast all my plans and reject all her past ambitious hopes to gratify her whim. I fear she may do some rash deed that shall force her name before the public, and then all that has passed will be made known; the old duke will be aroused, and everything go awry. Be watchful, and keep me well informed of all that may be noteworthy. If your mistress insists upon remaining in this country, let me know at once of her decision."

"You can be found at Stepmore Retreat, Sir Blaize?"

"At least until to-morrow, as I must abide there to-night."

Sir Blaize was about to ride away in the direction taken by Lord Charles Gray, when Reuben Maybold said:

"One word, Sir Blaize. Has your worship heard aught of those who are eager to slay me?"

"Aye, man, they are as fierce and unrelenting as ever. They are upon a false scent at present, and so long as you are faithful to me and my interests, I will see that they be held there. Enough of that, so keep your secret between your teeth. I must ride on and at full speed, or I may not overtake Lord Charles. Should he reach Stepmore Retreat before me, and Sir Bertram be there, sword thrusts may follow, and a scandal be made if not a murder be done."

With these words, Sir Blaize struck spurs to his horse, and galloped away.

Reuben Maybold gazed after him for a moment, and then putting spurs to his steed hurried away in an opposite direction.

(To be continued.)

## THE PROPHECY.

BY THE

Author of "Oliver Darell," "Michel-dever," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER II.

SUCH was the retrospect which passed through the mind of that old man, hovering on the brink of the great change. As the morning light penetrated into his room, he knew it was the last time his eyes would uncloze to behold it, and he was not sorry that it was so. Life had become a weary burden to him, and he was willing to lay it down in that last slumber, from which he believed there was no awakening. He had a vague conviction of a great first cause; but human beings he thought beneath the consideration of the Power who controlled the mighty universe; of which our system is but an infinitesimal fraction. The good and evil wrought by man, in his opinion, met their reward and punishment in this world; for of another and higher sphere his material ideas had no conception.

Mr. Falconer had been a hard man throughout life, and his courage did not desert him as the grim conqueror approached. A faded-looking woman, with a scanty supply of short, flaxen hair, which hung about her brow in elfish fashion, was slumbering in the chair beside his bed, and his lips curled with some of their old, scornful expression, as his eyes fell upon her.

"Poor old Cherub," he muttered, "she is fairly worn out with watching, and that selfish brute never spares her. Cherub! what an absurd name to give one's wife, to be sure; she might have deserved it once, though, for when she was young she was pink, waxy, and doll-like enough, I daresay. But a cherub's bloom, save hair, save everything that is attractive in woman, is a deplorable object."

The woman, as if conscious of his glance, suddenly started from her sleep, and unclosed a pair of pale, but very soft, blue eyes. In a slow, monotonous tone, she said:

"I do believe I fell off into a little sleep. I hope you have not wanted anything, sir. Apollo would rate me soundly if he thought I had been unmindful of my duties."

"No, I have not needed anything, Mrs. Ashford. I shall not trouble you much longer, for I think the sands in my glass are nearly spent. It is as well for you that it is so, for you are nearly worn out with your household duties and your kind attentance upon me."

"Don't talk in that way, sir. I am willing to do the best I can for you; but I have so much besides to attend to that I can't always be at hand. I wouldn't mind it—if Apollo were satisfied; but he's a hard man to please, and—sometimes I almost wish that I was as near the end of my work as you are. It's a hard world to get through, Mr. Falconer, and you may be glad, indeed, that you have so nearly done with it."

His old cynical smile flitted over his thin lips, and he said:

"If I could go back to my youth and start with such advantages as I began life with, I think I could make a better thing of it; but 'tis no use crying over spilt milk,' as the old proverb says. But there are some things I wish had gone differently. If I could have forgiven my daughter for deserting me, I might have her children or their descendants around me now, and not be left to the care of strangers. I am a very old man, Mrs. Ashford—this day I complete my eightieth year. It was foolish to me, long ago, that I should not live beyond that age, and I

shall not. I feel stronger this morning than I have for a month past, but it is the last sparkle of the expiring taper. When the sun reaches the meridian, I shall go to the silent land, and half your cares will be over. You have been kind to me, and I thank you for it."

"I've done the best for you I could," replied the woman, simply. "I couldn't always be at hand when you needed me, because Apollo and Fanny took up so much of my time. If things are so bad for you, sir, hadn't you better see the minister that lives down in Chiffen? He's said to be a good man, and earnest in his calling."

"Thank you for the suggestion; but my mind has not fallen into decay so much as my body has; and, as long as it is clear, I will not have a rapping parson coming to my side to call me distasteful names. A poor sinful worm of the earth I may be, and I daresay I have been something worse than that, but I don't choose to be told so by a fanatic who believes in his heart that there is no chance for such a man as I have been. If the great ruler regards so insignificant an atom as man, He will take the feeble spark of good that is in me and make some use of it, no doubt; the evil will go down to dust and forgetfulness."

Mrs. Ashford feebly shook her head in dissent, but she stood too much in awe of the old man to speak what was in her mind, earnest and simple as it was. After a pause, she said:

"Apollo believes in saving grace. Maybe you had better have a talk with him, Mr. Falconer."

Weak as he was, the old man laughed aloud at the suggestion. When the hollow sounds of his mirth had died away, he said:

"I hardly think that Mr. Ashford is suited to the position you would have him fill. He cares more for the things of earth than for the speculations of those who know no more about the future than we do. I don't intend to be frightened by him in my last hours, I assure you; and he would of course think it his duty to make me repent of the evil I have committed. It is a long catalogue; but something higher, nobler, and more merciful than man will judge it if He thinks it worth the trouble. I hardly believe He will; and if He does not, so much the better for me. The poet says something about wrapping our robes about us and lying down to pleasant dreams. It's a fine thing, and I have read it many times; but there will be no dreaming where I am going, only rest—eternal rest! After life's turmoil, it is a pleasant thought."

"But if it shouldn't be so, sir, after all," was the timid suggestion of Mrs. Ashford. "Wouldn't it be better to—to try and get pardon for the evil you have done in the flesh before the last chance is gone?"

"What's done is done, and can't be undone by a few professions, Mrs. Ashford. I don't believe in death-bed repentances. Since I have been lying here I have thought over my life many times, and I have been sorry for many things; but it is too late to alter them now. As the tree falleth, so it must lie; and I console myself with the certainty that a spirit of mercy will never resuscitate but to torture."

"Maybe so, sir; but if you would talk with Apollo, he might give you new views. He's a praying man—and he might—"

"There! that is enough. I have once declined the ministrations of your husband, and that should suffice. I have wandered on long enough, and there is Fanny crying for you to go and dress her. Why on earth do you call each other by such absurd names? If your husband were an Apollo in your eyes when you married him, he is no more one now than you are a cherub—and the poor child, too, must have her share of the ridiculous by being called Fantasia."

Mrs. Ashford blushed faintly, and deprecatingly said:

"It was his fancy to call me Cherub when I was young and good-looking; I know it's all gone now, but he's got in the habit of calling me so, you see, and he can't break himself of it. I returned the flattery by calling him my Apollo, and if I were to leave it off he'd think I had found out that he isn't so handsome as he was. And then his real name is William, and I can't bear it. The child, you know, is called Fantasia; he named her after Blue Beard's wife, but I did not like that; and she's such a wilful, tricky little sprite, that I called her Fantasia, and her father got into the way of doing so, too. I daresay you think us very silly people, but I like the names I have given my husband and child better than those that really belong to them."

"I daresay, and the little one is a fantastic little imp. Give me my drops now, if you please, and ask Mr. Ashford to come to me for a few moments—not in the capacity of soul-curer, however. I have some final directions to give him, and I wish to speak of them while my mind still remains under my own control."

Mrs. Ashford poured some medicated wine into a



small, quaintly-shaped glass, and held it to his lips. He swallowed with ease, for the paralysis that had fallen on him affected only his lower limbs, but it was gradually encroaching on the vital organs of his body. When it reached his heart he knew that all would be over with him; but he calmly lay upon his couch, feeling the slow and insidious approaches of the great conqueror with scarcely a wish to baffle him. He had exhausted the wine of life, and he had no fancy for the lees that were left in the bottom of the cup.

The cry of a fractious child came through the half-open door of the room, and Mrs. Ashford, promising to send her husband to the invalid, hastened to see after the one creature on earth to whom she clung with most passionate, though injudicious affection. This was her last and only living child, a little girl eight years of age, who sat up in her bed, calling imperiously:

"Come, dress me, chub! I'm in a hurry to get my breakfast; I'm hungry, chub—I'm hungry."

It was a strange-looking elf that uttered these words; a small wiry child, brown as a berry, with large black eyes, shaded by dark curling lashes, over which hung in waving self-locks a profusion of light silky-looking hair.

Mrs. Ashford lifted her in her arms, and caressingly said:

"There, my pet, you mustn't make such a noise, for the old gentleman is very ill this morning. You won't be cross, while mother washes you, and puts on your nice new dress, will you now, my precious? And it mustn't call its own mamma 'chub.' It ain't pretty to do so, Fanny-dear."

"I called you 'chub' if you'll put on my red dress with the shiny buttons. It'll be good."

"Well—well, suppose you must have your own way as you always do. But before I do anything for you I must call your father. I thought he was in here."

A tall, dark man of middle age came into the room. His figure was still good, but his face had lost all claims to the beauty which had induced his wife to bestow upon him the name of Apollo. Time and temper had deepened the lines upon it, till Mr. Ashford looked ten years older than he really was. He was that most difficult of human beings to live in peace with—a careless, fault-finding, cynical man, with boundless ideas of his own prerogative, and careless of the wounds he inflicted on her who was so deeply subjugated as to fear to turn on her oppressor.

She sheltered her child in her arms, as she deprecatingly said:

"Indeed, my dear, I don't encourage her; but she's little more than a baby, and it's no use to mind her nonsense. The old gentleman is very bad, and I came to find you. He wants to speak to you immediately, so you had better go to him at once. He thinks he'll hardly get through another day."

"So he's thought before, but he did get through," was the surly response. "I hope he's not mistaken this time, anyway, for I'm tired of the trouble he gives. If I had thought he'd live to the age of Methuselah, I would never have bought the old place with such a burden attached to it."

"I am sure he hasn't been much expense to us, my dear, for he pays for all his little luxuries himself. As to the trouble he has given me, I do not grudge my services. I wish I could have done more for a poor, forlorn old man like him."

"I am not thinking of you, but of myself, and all I've had to bear from him," he ruderly replied. "He is a crotchety old man, and, after all, he may swindle me out of the money which rightfully belongs to me for taking care of him so many years. Seventy is the allotted span of man's life, and here he has lived ten years beyond it, just to aggravate me. He had no enjoyment in life, and why he's clung to it so long, and taken such extra care of himself, I can't see."

"It was God's will that he should live on, my dear, and if you are as pious as I hope and believe you are, you cannot be in earnest in talking in this manner. You had better go to him now, for I believe he is right this time, about going speedily to his long home."

"I hope you are right for once in your life," snarled Ashford.

"Come, my pet, and let mother dress you, for I have not much time to give to you this morning. The old gentleman thinks he's very bad, and he may call for me any moment; besides there is the breakfast to get, and you know papa isn't very patient if he has to wait for me."

"I wish he'd go away and leave you and me, then we'd live on cakes and candy, and you needn't cook unless you wanted to. There—I'm still as a mouse, mother, you can put on my things."

This was a mere figure of speech, however, for it was impossible for that mercurial child to be quiet. She danced up and down, made pirouettes around her

mother, but always managed to remain within her reach, and the morning toilette was at last completed. Her waving hair was brushed smoothly back, for her mother had no time to curl it, even if her father would have permitted such a vanity; for he was one of those professing Christians who lay much stress on outward seeming, without taking heed to the inner spiritual nature.

With many injunctions to be quiet, and not disturb the sick man, Mrs. Ashford went into the kitchen to prepare the morning meal, though she felt jaded and worn out with the night-watch beside the bed of Mr. Falconer. Since he had required such attention, her husband had remained with him through the early hours of the night; but to her was left the burden of attending upon him from eleven o'clock till daylight.

"If he lasts much longer," thought the poor woman, "I shall break down under it, but I am not in a hurry for him to die, heaven forbid; for I'm afraid his selfish soul is in a bad way."

In half-an-hour the dainty meal she was preparing of broiled birds, muffins, and coffee, was fairly under weigh, and she was just wondering what had become of her little girl, when a wild cry from the child drew her hurriedly to a portico in the rear of the house, from which the sound proceeded.

#### CHAPTER III.

BREATHLESS with dread lest some misfortune had happened to her darling, Mrs. Ashford rushed out, and saw her bending over a large wicker basket, on the top of which was written, in a large clear hand:

"A present for Mr. and Mrs. Ashford."

The child exclaimed:

"Oh, there's a puppy or a kitten in there, for I hear it moving. Oh, how nice! but what did it come in a basket for?"

In bewildered astonishment, Mrs. Ashford lifted the basket, and carried it into the kitchen. As she put it down, a faint wail came from the occupant, and she gasped:

"Good heavens! it is a child! Why on earth was it brought here of all places in the world, and what am I to do with it? Apollo will never let it stay, he hates children, and he has no patience even with his own."

She gathered courage to untie the arched lid that was securely fastened down, and nestled in warm blankets, was a fair, plump child of about two years of age. The blue eyes half opened as the folds of flannel that enveloped it were turned back, but they closed again, as if unable to wrestle with the narcotic with which it had evidently been drugged.

Mrs. Ashford was passionately fond of children, and she lifted the little wail tenderly in her arms, and examined it with gentle care. The clothing it wore was perfectly plain, though of fine material, and daintily made. On its bosom was pinned a scrap of paper, on which was scrawled in nearly illegible letters:

"Her name is Violetta, and as you deal with her, may heaven reward, or punish you."

During this time Fantasia was dancing and clapping her hands, uttering shrill cries of delight over the newly-found treasure:

"A baby's better'n a puppy, and I'm going to have it to play with. Oh, my! ain't it nice?"

At that moment Mr. Ashford came into the kitchen and viciously exclaimed:

"What's all this clamour about, and the breakfast burning to a cinder? I smell it now. What's that you've got there, and where did it come from?"

His wife held the sleeping child towards him, and said:

"You can see for yourself what it is, but it is a strange present to be sent to us. If you will take her for a moment, I'll look after the birds. I am afraid they are scorching a little."

"Upon my word, madam, you take this very coolly—it's the most unheard-of impudence in whoever sent this child here, and I am not going to be burdened with it, I can assure you. Put her back where she came from, and look after your proper business. When breakfast is over, I'll see that the basket and its contents are packed off to the workhouse."

Mrs. Ashford knew there was no appeal from this decision, but she timidly suggested:

"Perhaps there is something in the basket that may make you change your mind. Hadn't you better look through it? The little thing seems as if she belonged to respectable people—that is, I mean people well to do, and she'd hardly be put on us, without giving something to keep her on. Everybody knows that we are too poor to burden ourselves with a strange child with nothing to pay her way."

She knew that to appeal to her husband's cupidity was the only chance to interest him in the helpless little creature, and he proved that she understood his nature, by drawing nearer and stooping over the basket.

"There's some sense in what you say, and I'll look, but if there's nothing, I shall do as I said—send the child to the workhouse. It's lucky that it is only a few miles distant."

As he spoke, he dived among the blankets in which the child had lain, and brought out a letter addressed to himself. On breaking the seal his eyes sparkled at the sight of a bank-note for a hundred pounds, and he rapidly skimmed over the lines addressed to himself.

"I am well acquainted with your character, Hiram Ashford, and I know the child I have taken the liberty of giving to you would be thrust ignominiously from your roof if she alone were sent. To prevent this, I enclose a sufficient sum for her expenses for a year. As she grows older, the annuity will be increased in proportion to the outlay you will incur on her account, and at a future day it may be a good thing for you to have sheltered this helpless, but not friendless, little creature. Make no efforts to discover whence she came, or to whom she belongs, for they are no concern of yours. I know your wife to be a good woman, and to her care I especially recommend this little girl. Her name is Violetta, and while she remains with you she can be known as Violet Ashford. The time may come when her true name and position may be made known. If that day never arrives, she will, at least, be respectably provided for."

"Upon my word—that is something like! The man who wrote that letter is no idiot. Give me the child, and look after your cooking. I don't want everything spoiled. You know I can't endure my food unless it is properly prepared."

Mrs. Ashford hastened to do as she was bid, and having attended to her duties, again drew near her husband, and timidly said:

"She is to stay there. May I read the letter, Apollo? I should like to know something about the little creature."

"Well, yes, you may as well read it, though the writer is not very respectful to me. You'll find out very little about the young one, anyway; but as it's to my interest to keep her, I suppose we may as well. A hundred pounds are not picked up every day, and what such a wile will eat and wear, will be next to nothing. Fanny's clothes will do nicely for her after she has outgrown them."

Mrs. Ashford slowly perused the letter, and giving it back with a slight sigh, said:

"It's a curious thing to happen, but the poor child is in somebody's way, I suppose. If we refuse to take her, she may fare worse. Indeed, I don't see how we could get rid of her at all, for we have no choice left us between adopting her, or sending her to the workhouse. Though the trouble will fall on me, I could not think of letting her go there, so I will do the best I can for her, even if the money that is promised does not come regularly."

"Oh! I dare say," snarled Ashford, "you are always ready to make a victim of yourself that you may taunt me with putting too much upon you. This young one is old enough to run about, and Fanny can make herself useful by helping to look after her; but, one thing is certain, if the promised annuity is not regularly paid, I shall find means to send her adrift. I am not going to be made to find food and raiment for other people's children. I am not quite so soft-hearted as that."

"Well, well, it will be time enough to discuss that when we find the writer of that letter does not mean to keep his promise about the money. Give the baby to me, and I will put her in my bed till she wakes. Poor thing! she seems to have been heavily drugged. It cannot be long since she was put where I found her, for cold as the morning is she is as warm as a toast."

She took the infant tenderly in her arms, and kissed the soft cheek with something of maternal passion.

Ashford roughly said:

"Make haste, or we shall not have time for prayers before breaking our fast."

A man of outward observance, Ashford never omitted this form; he thought it respectable to belong to a church, and maintain a reputation for sanctity to the outside world; though in his home he was a coarse tyrant, who never dreamed of controlling his temper, or considering the happiness of those dependent upon him. His wife tried to believe in him, but the effort was often vain, in spite of the love that still lingered in her heart for the man who had changed from the admiring lover to the irritable, fault-finding husband.

At the time of their union, Mrs. Ashford was the principal of a flourishing seminary for young ladies, and her present husband was employed by her as a teacher of drawing and modern languages. He spoke both German and French with fluency. He had his portfolio filled with drawings made by himself, which proved that he possessed some artistic ability, and in the small circle in which he figured, he was con-



[CHERUB AND FANTY.]

sidered a highly accomplished, and very attractive man.

In those days he made every effort to please Miss Bingham; for her school brought in a good income, and Mr. Ashford thought it would be no bad speculation to become joint proprietor of the establishment. His accomplishments and his fine person enabled him to succeed in this enterprise, and he assumed the control of his wife's affairs.

But unfortunately they did not prosper under his management. The school languished, its patrons became dissatisfied; Mrs. Ashford's health declined; her grief over the loss of several children in their infancy, had, it was asserted, impaired her mind to such an extent that she was no longer in a condition to superintend the education of others.

Under these circumstances, Mr. Ashford thought it best to sell the property his wife had accumulated, and invest the money it brought in the Vale, which, at that time, was offered for sale on favourable terms.

They removed to this secluded spot, and Mrs. Ashford found that she was left to the mercy of the man she had so unwisely chosen. Under the pretext that her health required exercise, he refused to employ a servant. He was an epicure in his small way, and a weary time had this poor woman while learning how to prepare such dainty food as he liked. Her labours hardened her hands, and destroyed the wax-like softness of her complexion, but they had one good result—she regained health both of body and mind—the latter never very strong, in spite of her success as a teacher.

Shortly after they came to the Vale to reside, Fantasia was born, and once more Mrs. Ashford thought her cup of happiness brimming over. She forgot all the weariness of her life—all the hardships she was forced to bear, when she looked upon the face of her child, and thought it was her own—her very own, to love her—to cling to her before all other human beings.

Certainly the child's father made small efforts to rival her in the affections of the tiny creature. He had little love for children, and less patience with the noise made by his own daughter than he would have thought it necessary to practice towards that of a stranger. At first Fantasia shrank towards that of a stranger, and frowning brow; but she soon became reckless of them.

After placing the infant in her bed, and carefully tucking her up, Mrs. Ashford flitted into the room of Mr. Falconer, to assure him that she would return in a few moments with his breakfast. He smiled faintly, and said:

"You need only bring me a cup of coffee. I think I shall enjoy that, but I wish for nothing more. Why

have I been left alone so long? I thought you would never come back."

"Oh, the strangest thing has happened: a sleeping child has been left at our door, and a letter in the basket with money in it to pay for her being taken care of. She is the prettiest little creature! fair as a lily, with brown hair that looks like rings of silk. I don't intend to nickname her though, for she has the sweetest of all names—Violet she is called, and I mean to deck her with her namesakes, when they are in bloom."

"What's in a name?" has been asked long ago; but, to hear you, one would think it was more important than anything else. So, a stray child has been cast down at your door, just as one might throw a stray kitten in his neighbour's garden; and, if I understand you aright, you intend to keep it."

"Of course we shall. I, for love, for I have taken a fancy to the little darling; and Apollo for the money. It was something handsome, and the letter promises more as she grows older."

"Of course that is bait held out; but, after you've taken the child, nothing more will be said about paying for what she may cost you. I should think you have enough to do without being burdened with another child beside your own."

"Oh, sir, don't say that about the pay to Apollo, because it may make him change his mind; and I've set my heart on having the little one as a companion for Fanty. You can't think how delighted she is with her new sister."

A singular expression came into the eyes of the old man, and he said:

"I do believe you are the best woman I ever have known, Mrs. Ashford. Who but you would take a strange bantling to her heart in this way? Would it make you happy to feel sure that you could keep this child, even if the promised money never comes?"

"I—I believe it would give me some comfort to know that I had not thrust the poor thing out into the world again. It is bad enough to have her put away by her own people; and, if I don't care for her, I don't know anybody that will."

"If that be your feeling, you shall have the right to do as you please about it—there is Ashford calling! I am in no hurry for my coffee—take your own breakfast before you come back to me; but ask Ashford to send the lawyer here in time to have everything settled before twelve o'clock. There! there!—go at once, or he'll have to shirk his prayers, to keep the breakfast from spoiling."

"Oh, sir, don't talk in that way, and you—"

Her voice broke down; and he bitterly said:

"I've lived as a scoffer, and it is in character to

die as one; but I hardly think I shall be judged harshly for jeering at such a sham as the religion of that man. I am going to make you independent of him, and if you don't escape from his iron thrall, you are only fit for a slave."

Mrs. Ashford did not hear this assurance, for the raised tones of her husband warned her that she had better obey his summons.

As Mr. Falconer had foretold, the prayer was a brief one, though he did not forget to petition for pardon for the unregenerate woman who perilled the soul of her co-worker on earth by her carelessness and shortcomings. Mrs. Ashford was used to this, and she thought her husband very good to pray that she might be set in the right path.

The breakfast was at length nearly ready; and, considering the neglect which had been unavoidable, it was not badly prepared; but Ashford found fault with everything, and banished Fantasia from the table because her incessant prattle disturbed his thoughts. He had despatched his factotum, Jonah, for the lawyer, who lived in a small village two miles distant, and he was pondering in his own mind what disposal would be made of the four thousand he had paid Mr. Falconer for the farm on which he lived.

The old man had disowned his daughter, and had sworn that not a shilling belonging to him should ever pass into the possession of her descendants. He had heard nothing of his son-in-law for more than twenty years; and to whom would he be more likely to bequeath the remnant of his fortune than to those who had ministered to him in his forlorn old age?

"He'll be likely to leave it to her," Ashford thought, as he glanced at his wife; "but if he does, I'll wheedle her out of it, as I have out of all the rest. I've a good sum put by, and with this windfall I could carry out my plans, and leave this dreary, drudging life far behind me—rid myself of the encumbrances that hang on to me here, and then—hey! for a jolly life in that beautiful France I have so longed to see again. No more hypocritical canting then. I should be free—free!"

He arose, and paced the floor impatiently, listening for the arrival of Mr. Whitney, the old lawyer within his reach. He would have preferred a less honest man, but there was no choice; and he wondered if the money were left to his wife, what precautions would be taken to secure it to her individual use.

"It doesn't matter; I'll get the benefit of it all the same," he muttered, as the sound of some one stamping the snow off his feet reached his ears, and he hurried to the front door to receive the man of law, who had been summoned to make Mr. Falconer's will

(To be continued.)





[SIBALLA AWAKES.]

## THE FLOWER GIRL.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SORCERESS, who remained in London, when King Richard led his forces to the fatal encounter on Bosworth Field, prowled about the great De Montfort palace during the absence of her son, with her heart and brain a prey to a thousand fears.

The deep pit in the chamber of the east wing had been filled up, and the trap-door made a part of the solid floor, while the guilty terrors of Siballa Thornbuck had covered the spot with thick plates of iron, firmly screwed to the timbers.

Still, in her disturbed dreams, her skull-faced and skeleton-formed sister crept from the pit, followed by the assassin-ape.

Of the many crimes she had committed, none pressed so heavily upon her soul as the murder of Callisa. They had been sisters and partners for many years; and though Siballa's treachery towards Callisa was the merited punishment of the other, and could scarcely be considered as a crime, but rather as the only good deed ever done by the wretched sorceress, Siballa brooded bitterly over the murder.

"I hated her, and I would do it again," she reasoned; "and yet I wish I hadn't, for she haunts me, and her ghost strangles me every night."

She was brooding thus in her lonely room one night, after the battle of Bosworth Field, when her thoughts were interrupted by the sudden entrance of Roger Vagram.

He had succeeded in reaching London before his pursuers, how far in advance of them he knew not, though he believed it was several hours at least—with time enough to secure his hoards of gold and gems, and to leave the city with some surety of escape.

The night was far advanced when he hurried into the almost deserted palace, and though a rumour of a great and decisive battle had preceded him, no one knew how it had resulted, nor did he care to tell the truth.

He hastened to speak with his mother, whose assistance he needed. She started with alarm as he appeared before her, and said:

"King Richard is defeated? Your face tells the tale."

"Speak low, woman," he replied, in an agitated voice. "Yes, defeated and slain, and Henry Tudor is King of England. But that is not the worst."

"What can be worse? Henry Tudor is now your bitter enemy."

"Were that all I might hold my own, for Henry Tudor loves gold and I could buy my pardon. But Henry De Ross, Earl De Montfort, lives and even now is hot in my pursuit. Come, aid me to remove my gold and jewels to a place of secrecy, and me to fly from England."

"So he lives!" exclaimed Siballa, trembling. "I feared it when I saw the skeleton in the chest. But there is no time to wonder now—we must act. There is no better place to hide your valuables than in the secret well in Callisa's house."

"So I determined, as I fled to London," replied Roger Vagram. "No one knows of the existence of that well but you and me. We have at least four hours to act in before Henry De Ross can arrive."

He spoke confidently, for he believed as he declared, but he underrated the keenness and vigour of the pursuit.

Even as he uttered the last word of the above remark, two warlike forms dashed open the door and confronted him, sword in hand.

Roger Vagram swore a fierce and terrible oath, full of rage and despair, for he recognised Earl Henry and Sir Mortimer.

Their visors were up, and the sorceress also recognised them at a glance. Father and son, there they were, ready and able to exact terrible and unsparing vengeance for the past.

She shrieked with terror and darted from the room by a rear door.

"The game is played," she muttered, as she fled from the palace through the garden. "Roger is lost, and I must go hide. I'll go to Callisa's house for a time."

Father and son saw the rapid retreat of the sorceress, but they cared nothing for that. Roger Vagram was their aim, and as he drew his sword, that of Earl Henry instantly clashed against it.

"Stand aside my son. This villain must be slain by me!"

"If you fall I will take your place," replied Sir Mortimer, as he stood ready to aid his father and to cut off the retreat of Roger Vagram, whose glance towards the rear door proved his desire to escape.

The combat was fierce and sharp, for Roger Vagram was both brave and desperate, while Henry De Ross had the injuries of years to avenge.

Inch by inch De Ross forced back his enemy, whose admirable defence and armour of proof could not avoid the point and edge of a sword which had no superior in Europe.

Meanwhile Nicholas Flame and other retainers of Sir Mortimer and Earl Henry had thronged about the door, eager to strike a blow at the false-hearted

ruffian who had usurped the rights and title of their beloved chief.

A word from Sir Mortimer kept them mere excited spectators of the combat, yet Roger Vagram's soul sank with despair as he heard their muttered curses upon his head.

Whether he escaped Earl Henry's sword or not, death was impending over him irrevocably.

His anguish increased as he became convinced that his enemy was not aiming to slay, but to capture him alive, no doubt to deliver him to the common hangman, an infamy more terrible than death to one so proud as Roger Vagram.

He sought to arouse the wrath of the earl by hurling bitter and insulting epithets upon him and his wife, but De Ross remained unruffled, and fought on steadily towards his purpose, which was to capture Vagram unaided.

Weaker and weaker grew the defence and attack of Vagram, and he turned to leap from the window, seeking death in any form rather than upon the infamous tree.

Earl Henry divined his purpose in time to prevent it, and hurled him to the floor, where he was instantly bound hand and foot by Flame and others.

"Brutal wretch!" exclaimed the victorious earl, as he spat upon his cruel foe, "I would not stain my sword with the life of such a hound. Live to be hanged, while the mob hoots at your death."

Roger Vagram made no reply, for he knew his fate was sealed. By the command of the earl, who acted in the name of the king, he was imprisoned in the darkest dungeon of the tower, there to await his inevitable doom—infamous death by the rope.

When Roger Vagram was carried in fetters from the stately palace he had ruled so long as lord and master, Earl Henry turned towards his son, saying:

"We have secured the wolf. We must now secure the wolf's dam."

"The sorceress fled as we entered the room," replied Sir Mortimer, "and I fear it will be very difficult to discover one who knows every hiding place in London."

"We may find her sooner than you imagine, Sir Mortimer," said Flame, in a confident tone. "She has or had a sister called Callisa Staver, and together for years they owned a certain disreputable house in King's Lane."

"So? Then we three will at once seek for her there," interrupted the earl; "she shall hang upon the same gallows with her son."

Meanwhile the terrified sorceress had hurried to find refuge in the house formerly occupied by Callisa Staver.

She found the place deserted, dark and damp. The two women servants of Callisa had despaired of the return of their mistress, after waiting several days, and had fled, carrying with them all the valuables they could find.

No one had entered the house after their departure, as it bore the reputation of being haunted, and was therefore shunned by all.

Siballa, groping among the corridors, found a half-filled lamp, which she lighted and examined the deserted rooms above and below.

"Come," she thought, "I shall be safe here until morning. After that I will hide in the country. I have gold enough to sustain me, and I have the rich jewels which I took from the skeleton in the chamber. Where shall I sleep? Oh, in the tapestried chamber, as that has not been disturbed. What noise is that?"

She paused, for she thought she heard a noise and muffled tread in the hall.

She listened in vain, and moved on, muttering:

"It is the wind. I noticed that a storm was rising before I came in. Yes, hear the thunder. What a keen flash of lightning! I hate thunder and lightning. The tapestried chamber is the place. There I cannot see the lightning and hardly hear the thunder. How the wind howls through this part of the house!"

A fierce storm of wind, rain, and hail was sweeping over the city. It had been gathering its strength all day, and was now roaring without. The wind howled through many a crevice, and it was with difficulty that the sorceress kept her lamp burning until she entered the tapestried chamber.

There all was stillness, though the deep rumble of the thunder could now and then be heard, but the blast was shut out from that jealously-guarded apartment, nor could the glare of the lightning penetrate the heavy curtains of the windows.

That room had been carefully prepared for the perpetration of midnight and secret murder. The thick walls of oak, doubly hung with tapestry, and the closely-shut windows, stifled the death-cry of those who had perished there.

"I am safe in here," said the sorceress, as she closed and made fast the door. "No one, except myself, knows of the secret door behind the tapestry, and if I am tracked by my enemies I can escape into the passage, and so be in the streets while they are breaking down that door. Ho! I never expected to sleep in that bed. Come, the sheets and covering are damp and musty, but this leopard-skin is soft and dry. I'll spread that upon the bed and sleep on it. Sleep with one eye wide open—with both ears open. They can't get in without waking me. I'll leave the lamp burning. Somehow I can't bear to dream as I always do; wake up and be in the dark. The spirits fly from light, but if it is dark they haunt me. I'll just take a peep at the secret door, to see if it is all ready for a retreat."

She prowl behind the tapestry for a few moments, and then emerged, covered with dust.

"It is all right. Moves up and down with no noise. Now for a nap, for I am dreadfully worn out with worry of mind. I wonder if I can sleep. It seems to me as if I shall sleep well to-night."

She clambered upon the soft bed and extended her heavy, unwieldy body with a growl of intense satisfaction.

She slept.

She had slept profoundly for an hour, when the circular piece of wood fell from the door upon the carpet. The slight noise it made did not awake the sorceress. She was sleeping more profoundly than she had done for months; than she had indeed since she saw Callisa and the ape plunge into the shiny depths of the palace-pit.

A face appeared at the orifice in the door; a fiendish, exultant, demoniacal face; a face all aflame with merciless triumph—the face of Callisa Staver.

Siballa Thornbuck, had she awakened then and seen that face of a living skeleton skull, with its horrible visage, corpse-like in hue, with great ghastly eyes of flame and hate, would have fancied it a vision of her brain.

But it was no vision. It was reality. It was the face of Callisa, alive, exultant, vengeful, triumphant, demoniac.

Scarcely had this face appeared at the orifice when the tapestry behind the bed was agitated, raised, and another face, hideous, brutish, black and fearful in its mongrel-like ugliness, became visible, and peered with greedy, cunning eyes at the sleeping sorceress.

This second face was that of Barab, the assassin-ape.

Had the sorceress opened her eyes and seen this flat, snake-like forehead, these small, villainous eyes, this protruding mouth, this horror, she would have deemed it all a nightmare, a phantasm of her fevered brain, a something only to be dreamed of.

But it was the face of the assassin-ape, alive, in the flesh, full of strength, rage, eagerness to shed human blood, half-starved and murderous.

Both were there, watching their intended victim—Barab and his mistress. They had escaped from the slime of the pit within an hour after the sorceress saw them fall into the mouth of the abyss.

They scrambled into a sewer, which led from the bottom of the pit to the banks of the Thames. The bottom of the pit was but a few feet below the level of the street, its great apparent depth arising from the fact that the shaft of the pit had been built up from the ground to the third story of the palace by Roger Vagram, to entrap intruders upon the hidden chamber.

Callisa and the ape had made their way and escaped to the river. She easily regained her power over the ape, and dreading the omens of the sorceress concealed herself in London, patient and vigilant to take revenge.

Never for a day since her escape, had Callisa ceased to watch for vengeance, but as her evil sister always remained in De Montfort palace, she was secure until she fled from Earl Henry and Sir Mortimer.

Callisa, ever watching, saw her hurry from the palace and pursued her to this cursed house of crime and murder.

She stole into the house with her obedient ape soon after the sorceress, and when she saw the latter seek refuge in the tapestried chamber, vengeance became a necessity.

Siballa slept on, and this hairy, famished monster stole into the room and selected a spot from which to spring to the command of Callisa.

The sorceress had often seen him crouch for his leap over that same spot, awaiting her command to assassinate. He now crouched there to assassinate her. It was simply retributive justice.

Callisa was not yet ready to give the signal of death. Bashful, eager and intelligent, turned his flaming eyes upon her, but she made no sign. She was silent, and the ape waited with motionless patience.

His mistress thrust in her long bony hand and noisily lifted the bar. She held it until she pushed the key from the lock, inserted another and then opened the door.

She held the bar in her right hand as a weapon, and entered the room.

Her enemy, her victim, her sister was before her, sleeping, helpless, doomed. "There was no mercy nor pity in the hideous visage of Callisa. There was only hate, malice, revenge, fiendish joy and murder. The flame of the lamp shone on her emaciated face as the flame may shine upon the faces of evil ones about to torture the condemned."

"Siballa!" she cried, shrilly. "Siballa, awake!"

Callisa would put a keener edge upon her revenge. It was not enough that her victim must die. She should recognise the murderer. She should discover the manner in which she was to be assassinated.

The sorceress heard the cry. Even in her deep sleep she recognised her name. But she did not awake. Sleep had too firm a hold upon her senses to be lightly shaken off.

Yet she moved, groaned, and turned upon her side, so that her face was towards her sister.

"Siballa Thornbuck, awake!" again screamed Callisa. "Awake!"

The sorceress was aroused by this second cry—and the bands of sleep were destroyed in an instant. She opened her eyes, half arose upon the bed, glared at the grinning Callisa, at the crouching ape, a fearful horror froze upon her bloated face, and with dreadful agony in her tones, she shrieked:

"Callisa and the ape! Great heaven! alive!"

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

As the sorceress uttered that thrilling cry—"Callisa and the ape! Great heaven!—alive!" she started to spring to the floor, but at that instant Callisa stamped her foot and screamed:

"Barab! At her!"

The hairy monster hurled himself upon the sorceress, and his sharp fangs were tearing into her throat in less than a second; his huge claws lacerating her flesh with cat-like rapidity.

The sorceress had a large knife in the folds of her dress, for she never went unarmed—the same broad-bladed weapon with which she defied the mob in Shingly Green, a weapon, formidable not merely from its size and keenness, but because its point and edge were envenomed with a deadly and painful poison.

She grasped the hilt of this knife at the very instant that the fangs of Barab pierced her fat throat. Had she been lean, like her sister, her death would have been instantaneous.

A horrible wound was made, but not a mortal one, and ere Barab could plunge his hideous jaws into that wound again the knife of the sorceress was thrust into his side.

With a savage cry the ape inflicted a mortal wound, but not instant death.

Barab could do no more. The action of the poison was immediate. A spasm convulsed his huge, misshapen frame, a film darkened his eyes, and grinning hideously in his death agony he fell from the bed to the floor, struggling, gasping, dying.

Callisa cursed her neglect when she saw the poisoned knife flash in the desperate hand of the sorceress. She should have deprived her sister of that weapon while the sorceress slept. She sprang forward with the iron bar upraised to aid the ape, but all that we have related passed in a moment, and ere the bar fell the ape had received his fatal wound.

The sorceress was mortally hurt. The second bite of the ape had severed veins, arteries and windpipe, yet she had strength enough to plunge her knife into the breast of Callisa, as the latter struck at her with the bar.

Callisa, screaming with pain and terror, staggered back from the bed.

Siballa, beaten prostrate by the bar, dying, but vindictively collected all her fast-falling strength and hurled her knife at Callisa.

The heavy blade flew through the air true to its aim, and was buried to the hilt in the side of Callisa.

The sorceress, grimaced with agonised mockery as her sister tugged at the weapon, and then, with an awful roll of her bloodshot and glaring eyes, yawned and was dead the next instant.

Callisa tugged at the handle of the knife in vain. The blade had pierced a rib, and remained immovable.

The poison of the weapon had lost much of its virulence in the body of the ape, still enough remained upon it to destroy Callisa. Enough to destroy her slowly, but surely. The dead ape had been fortunate in receiving the first blow from the envenomed knife, for death followed immediately.

Not so with the wretched Callisa. Her death was slow, with long, excruciating spasms of horrible agony.

"It was true," she groaned, as she writhed upon the floor. "It was foretold that steel would slay me. What pain! Ah, what misery! Oh, what torture!"

While she writhed, shrieked, and howled, Earl Henry, Sir Mortimer, Nicholas Flame and a woman in black rushed into the tapestried chamber.

The dying woman recognised all of them, and fixing her eyes upon the woman, exclaimed:

"Martha Mansfield, you have lived to see me die!" and with these words expired.

So perished Callisa, Siballa and their assassin ape, in the tapestried chamber in which they had wrought most infamous and cruel crimes.

"It is dreadful," said the earl, as his companion recoiled from the appalling spectacle. "But it is the justice of heaven. Let us leave this accursed spot. To-morrow I will send men hither to bury the dead and to examine the premises."

As they were about to depart, Sir Mortimer perceived a leathern pouch lying upon the floor, near the bed. Prompted by curiosity, he picked it up and looked at its contents.

"Ah!" said he, replacing them carefully. "These are the jewels I saw upon the skeleton in the chest. That is a mystery I cannot explain. Who was that woman?"

"Time may reveal," replied the earl, as all hastened from the house.

The storm on that night did not cease until its wrath had prostrated and demolished many a house in London, and among these that of Callisa was shattered by lightning, fired and totally consumed.

The vengeance of just heaven demanded the destruction even of the house in which so many crimes had been perpetrated.

When the sun rose on the next day, it shone upon a heap of ghastly ashes, charred timbers and calcined bones—those of the sorceress, of Callisa, and the assassin-ape.

By orders of Sir Mortimer, search was made for the secret well. It was found, and amid the score of mouldering and decayed bodies in its depths was recognised that of the German pedler, Herr Fitzgraf, who had visited England to betray Earl Henry to Roger Vagram.

The confessions of Dame Martha Mansfield proved that Lauretta and Playdills were the daughters of Sir Albert and Lady Lottie, though neither the baron nor the baroness had any doubt of that fact.

Earl Henry was soon re-established in his long-undisputed rights by King Henry VII., and Sir Mortimer united in a marriage of life-long happiness to the beautiful Lauretta, who thus, in time, rose from the lowly and exposed station of a flower girl of London, to the lofty rank of Countess De Montfort.

It was at the marriage feast of the blissful and loving pair that Lady Lottie Tempest explained to King Henry, how she had evaded the keen search for the suspected packet of letters.



"I was led from the audience-chamber of the tyrant Richard, into an apartment in which were four ladies of the court, who were appointed to search my person," said Lady Lottie. "All were bitter Yorkists, and known to me as no friends of mine. As I was led into the room, I took off the robe or gown which my husband had placed upon my shoulders when we were arrested, and slyly slipped the packet from my bosom into the mantle, rolled it up, and said to one of the ladies:

"I pray you, Lady Marmain, to hold this for me while I am subjected to such indignities as King Richard is pleased to inflict upon me."

"She seemed touched by my manner, and taking the robe held it under her arm while the others searched me sharply. They found nothing, of course, and after the examination I received the gown from Lady Marmain, secretly replaced the perilous packet in my bosom, while casting the dress over my shoulders, and thus foiled the usurper."

King Henry applauded her nerve and dexterity; as well he might, for Lady Lottie's coolness and strategy had gone far to place the crown of England upon his head.

"Woman's wit excels that of man," said Sir Mortimer, smiling, "yet even woman's wit has failed to tell me the mystery of the chest."

With these words he placed the necklace, bracelets, and rings upon the table. The jewels sparkled and the gold glittered, for Sir Mortimer had had them polished and brightened.

King Henry, who had heard of the mystery of the chest, though the jewels had not been shown to him, took them in his hand, started, and exclaimed:

"I know these jewels, and also her to whom they belonged."

"So," said Lady Lottie, "man's knowledge is more powerful than woman's wit. Who was the lady, my liege?"

"Thus her fate has come to light," replied the king, musingly, as he regarded the jewels. "The skeleton in the closet was that of Lady Matilda Maurice, wife of Sir Louis Maurice, who was slain at the battle of Tewkesbury. She accompanied her young husband to the field, viewed the battle at a distance, heard of the fall of him whom she loved better than she loved life itself, became wild, a mad with grief, rushed from her attendants to the field and was never heard of after. I have never seen those jewels until this day, and yet I know them to be those worn by Lady Maurice on that day, at the very moment when she rushed to the field to seek for the body of her husband."

The hearers of the king expressed their surprise by their glances, but remained silent.

King Henry continued:

"Two sets of this pattern of jewellery, only two sets, were ever made; for the artist who made them had scarcely completed the second set when he died. One set was purchased by Sir Louis Maurice, and presented to his bride a few days before his death. The other was purchased by my aunt, from whom I heard all that I have related, and who presented to me her set, the exact duplicate of this. I have that set now. No doubt, then, that it was the crazed and unhappy Lady Maurice who took the place of Earl Henry De Montfort in the chest, and there perished."

"Poor, unhappy lady!" sighed Lady Mabel, as tears fell from her eyes. "Heaven bless her soul, for she preserved the life of my husband in her madness!"

Our story is now told, and we hope there is no mystery in it unexplained.

Roger Vagran was hanged as a felon. Earl Henry and his faithful wife, Lady Mabel, lived happily for many years, and children were born to them, who shared their love for their eldest son, the noble Sir Mortimer.

When Earl Henry was gathered to his fathers at a ripe old age, Lady Mabel departed to the spirit-world with him, for they passed away on the same day. Then Sir Mortimer became Earl Mortimer, and was one of the most honoured of the nobles of Henry VII., an illustrious statesman and soldier, a happy husband and father.

Little Flaydilla, little "Daisie Blossom," in time married a noble knight who rose to be a peer during the reign of Henry VII., which lasted twenty-four years.

Nicholas Flame and Andrew Tarl, honoured and respected, lived to die at an old age in the palace of Earl Mortimer, and departed blessing the kind and beautiful Countess Lauretta, once "the Flower Girl of London."

THE END

**THE UGLY RUSH.**—The writer of the "Inner Life of the House of Commons," alluding to Mr. Henley's prediction that we might expect an "ugly rush," says:—"As we stood in the lobby of the House of

Commons, looking at the disorganised mob of members, new and old—most of them new, though—as they rushed, helter-skelter, up to the house of Lords, an Irishman by our side exclaimed: "Here comes old Henley's ugly rush!" What do you mean by that?" said we, thinking of Mr. Henley's meaning. "Why," said our facetious neighbour, "it is a rush of uglies, and that must be an ugly rush!" We could not help laughing at this, for it chimed in with our own thought, for it had struck us at first sight that we had never seen such a mass of rough, rugged, shaggy, unkempt men together before; and, though the feeling became somewhat mitigated when we came to look more closely at them as they sat in order before us on the benches, we have not quite got rid of our first impression. Much of this apparent ugliness of the members, we suspect, is to be attributed to their hirsuteness. There are no more ugly faces here, we suspect, than would be found in any other average assembly. But, then, their countenances are so concealed by beards, moustaches, and whiskers that it takes a long time to discover what their features really are. We believe that now considerably more than half the members are bearded like the pard. And then these beards, as a rule, are not well kept—not clipped and trimmed like your French and Italian beards—but are left to grow as nature wills, loose, shaggy, luxuriant, wild, like old-fashioned hedgerows such as we used to see before farmers discovered that good farming required that hedgerows should be kept down; this increases the difficulty of discovering the true features of the men."

### MAX WEBER'S GHOST.

I AM named Hans Müller—I am an old man of eighty now. Once, like all the rest of the world, I was young. I was a student at the University of Göttingen, of the class of 18— . We were wild fellows, we students. We were afraid of nothing, alive or dead—at least we thought so, and a good joke was worth a fortune to us.

Perhaps we smoked too much, perhaps we drank too much beer—perhaps we were too wild and jovial, but those were golden days, their memory thrills me now, though my hair is white.

I never had friends like the madly-mirthful fellows of that class. They are all dead now, save myself and one other. We still live, but I have no wish to meet him; should I do so, two old fellows would grasp each other's hands and Doctor Werner and Professor Müller would be made acquainted. But Hans and Gottlieb would not meet—no, no—no more than if the seas divided them. In heaven youth returns to us, and then, heaven grant it, I shall meet them.

But I began to tell you about Max Weber's Ghost—and I am preaching a sermon.

Of all the fellows at the university, I loved Max Weber best. Max of the yellow hair and blue eyes, that danced as girls' eyes dance when one makes love to them. Dimples in his cheeks, too, like a girl's, full red lips, and the whitest of white teeth. Once when our class played the tragedy—Hamlet, he played Ophelia; beautiful enough he was then to fall in love with; a slender fellow with white hands; he looked like a woman; but he was braver than the biggest and the wildest there.

Always in our sports we were together, he and I—the biggest, the brownest of the class—I would have given my life for his, and he knew it—so would he have died for me—my beloved Max.

There had been a funeral in the chapel. We had been to it. One would have thought it would have sobered us; but it did not.

It was a man of ninety who had died—our professor's uncle. Heaven forgive us! I think we felt that that was long enough for a man to live.

Once over, we were not impressed. We lounged about the halls, for it was, of course, a holiday, and talked together.

The old man who had charge of the chapel's cleansing and arrangements, went in and out for awhile, talking to one and all as he did so. At last he went away, and upon going, being deaf, old, and very stupid, dropped the bunch of keys, without knowing it, on the ground, at Max Weber's very feet. Before he discovered the loss and returned for them, Max had unlocked the chapel door. When he did that I knew in a moment that he had some trick afoot.

"The keys! the keys!" muttered the old man, coming back, "I've dropped them somewhere."

Max handed them to him carelessly.

"There they are—all safe," he said.

The old man counted them suspiciously.

"Just eight," he said. "Yes, they are all here, for a wonder," and hobbled away, muttering to himself that no doubt the boys had picked his pockets.

When he was gone Max began to laugh.

"We'll give him a fine fright in the morning," he said. "We shall tell a story that no one will believe

—a thing he hates, you know. We'll get a sheet from my bed, and some linen from Barbet's great roll. She is making shirts for Professor M., you know, and you shall lay me out upon the table just where the body laid, you know. When the old man comes in before prayers, he will have such a tale to tell as will bring half the college to chapel to see what it means, and they will see nothing; I'll take care of that."

Perhaps my blood would run cold at such a suggestion now. Then I applauded it. We stole the linen from the work room, which Barbet, the college seamstress, had left unlocked, and going back to the chapel, soon, by dint of chalk and white garb, made an awful-looking object of our bright-eyed Max Weber. Even we felt half nervous as we saw the effect of our work in the fading twilight. Max alone laughed merrily.

"Good night," he said. "You must go in soon, and the doors will be locked. Say that I am ill in bed and want no supper. No one will be suspicious of any trick to-night."

"But you can't stay here until dawn," said I.

"I can and will," said Max. "There, go—don't spoil all by staying here."

We went; but my heart sunk within me as I looked back at the awful figure we left behind us. And it almost seemed as though Max were really dead. No one missed him. We all retired as usual. Perhaps the rest slept well; I did not. Terrible dreams haunted my slumber when I closed my eyes—one so vivid that I could scarcely believe that it was not reality. I thought Max leant over my bed, and whispered in my ear:

"Ferdinand Müller, I am really dead. I have been punished for my mockery. I lie a corpse in the chapel—pray for the repose of my soul."

Then the vision seemed to glide out of my door, opening and shutting it after him in this dream—if dream it were. I started to my feet in consternation. I flew to the door and looked out into the corridor; all was dark and silent. I returned to bed, and lay awake watching for the daylight. At last it came—gray, ghostly. I heard doors unlocked. I saw from my window old Claf Onderdecken go towards the chapel. Then I saw him flying back shouting and screaming in terror, half-dressed students running out to meet him—the professors in their dressing-gowns; the bed-makers and other college servants all gathering about the spot to hear that the body buried yesterday had been brought back to the chapel.

Those who were in the secret grinned and winked at each other. No one staid behind. We trooped into the chapel. Our class, at least, expecting to find nothing, for Max Weber was not to be caught in a trick, but there—before the reading desk, just as we had left it, lay the figure we had dressed so carefully.

It lay motionless. It never stirred a finger. It was so still, white and awful that my blood curdled in my veins.

Why did Max do this? What could arise from it but detection?

We asked the question of each other, with our eyes. We drew nearer. The long, yellow hair floated a little in the air we stirred, but the face was immovable. I put out my hand to touch it. It was as cold as ice. I screamed aloud:

"He is dead—really dead—Max Weber is really lying here dead."

The story was soon told now. Our grief was too great to permit us to fear anything from exposure; surgeons and physicians were called, but they could not restore life to the poor body. Their verdict was that he had died of heart disease, probably induced by terror.

As soon as it was certain that all hope was over, we buried him in the neighbouring churchyard; he had no relations, and there was no one to notify. Our class suffered, one and all, very bitterly, and as Max was the ringleader of the conspiracy we were let off with a reprimand.

It seemed probable that it would be some time before we were merry enough to play another joke. The terrible ending of this one had fallen too heavily upon our hearts.

The night after the funeral I went to bed as usual. I had locked my door—I was sure of that, and there was but one in the room. The lamp was out, but a faint gleam of moonlight filled the room.

I had been half asleep, when a low tapping at the head of my bed aroused me. I started up, and looked over my shoulder. Max Weber, just as he appeared in life, stood there, looking at me!

My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth in terror. I felt my senses leaving me. I fell back upon my pillow quite powerless. When I regained strength once more the form was gone.

We met, next morning, at breakfast—as hollow-eyed and pallid a group as could well be imagined.

I could read in the face of each member of the class the story of my own experience, and each in turn confided to me the awful truth. Every one of

us had seen Max Weber's ghost. To some he had come in silence; to some he had spoken. The words he uttered were, in every case:

"Thou art guilty of my blood!"

The most sceptical could not doubt. The whole class was not mad, neither could each have dreamed the same dream. Max had risen from his grave to reproach us—of that there was no doubt.

The second night we retired full of apprehension; but no ghost visited us. Professor M—, however, met us with a troubled countenance; and despite his attempts at composure, we guessed what had happened—he, also, had seen Max Weber's ghost! In fine, before a week had passed, no mortal within the college but had been visited by the uneasy spirit. Many were ill of nervous disorders; some left for home. Strangers annoyed us with inquiries; and the class which had been engaged in the joke which ended so unhappily, were under the severe displeasure of the community generally.

As for me, I was not ill, but an anxiety such as I had never felt, rested upon my soul. I fancied that Max Weber was unhappy in his new condition; that, indeed he might have perilled his soul by his mockery of death's solemnity. To speak to him—to strive to discover what was his condition—became the hope of my life. Often the shade appeared to me, but it tarried but a little while; it shook its head and sighed; it clasped its hand and mourned, but never spoke. At last, two weeks from Max Weber's terrible death, I found myself awake at midnight—and watching for my now frequent visitor. As the clock struck, it opened the door and stood there with its hands crossed upon its breast. I did not wait for it to vanish; I cried aloud:

"Max Weber, let me speak to you!"

And I was answered. A hollow and awful voice came from the spirit's lips:

"Hans Müller, what do you want with me?"

"To know why you come," I answered.

The spirit moaned.

"Are you suffering in any way?" I asked.

The spirit bowed its head.

"In body or in mind?"

I saw the lips form the word "both."

"Will you tell me your condition?" I asked—my blood freezing in my veins.

The spirit looked at me mournfully. It extended its right arm to its full length and with the forefinger of the dropped hand pointed downward.

So it stood like a statue, the horrible meaning of the gesture too apparent to be mistaken.

I tried to speak, but failed—I arose to my feet, but found them powerless—I stretched my arms towards the figure at the door, and fell forward at its feet.

In an instant someone knelt beside me—warm arms of flesh and blood raised me—a beating heart was pressed against mine—Max Weber clasped me to his bosom—the living, breathing Max Weber.

"I have gone too far," he said; "my friend, forgive me."

The story is easily told, though for weeks I was too ill to hear it.

There had been a funeral in the village that day, and Max had noticed that the deceased was very much like himself. The plan he formed for terrifying the old man was a ruse to deceive us. After we had gone he had taken the body of the young man from the vault where it lay and placed it in the chapel where we had left him. Afterwards he had concealed himself in an empty out-building, and in the confusion had contrived to re-enter the college—the dress we wore concealing his individuality in a measure—and his power of mimicry enabling him to deceive those who met him on the stairs or in the corridors.

The trick was too terrible a one to admit of any excuse; and Max Weber was expelled from college; but I forgave him, and we were good friends ever after until the day when pall and shroud were his in very earnest. M. K. D.

**KING GEORGE OF GREECE** (who was never acknowledged by Isabella II. as the successor of King Otho) has been recognised by the Provisional Government of Spain as King of the Hellenes.

**ELECTROTYPED ORNAMENTS.**—The gallery of Greek and Roman sculpture in the Louvre have been largely increased and embellished of late, and amongst the ornaments introduced are a number of bas-reliefs, round bosses, and allegorical figures, covered with a coating of metal, the work of M. Cossinus. The effect of these electrotyped bronzes is extremely rich, while the cost is trivial compared with real bronzes.

**DISCOVERY OF FRESCOS OF THE 13TH CENTURY.**—A very interesting discovery has been made in Christian art in the department of the Gard, in France, by two archaeologists of Avignon, the Abbé Pougnet and M. Canon, advocate; in examining the ancient crypt of the parish church of the village of Lirac, in

the canton of Roquemaure, they discovered beneath the whitewash of the walls of this underground sanctuary some frescoes, which they believe to be the work of artists of the 13th century. The portions which have been cleaned represent a bishop and an apostle, each with the aureola of the saints. The crypt is certainly as old as the thirteenth century, at least, and the architecture, which is excessively simple, is classed as belonging to the transition from the original to the secondary Roman style, but approaching more nearly to the latter than the former. It is probably the primitive church of Lirac: the oldest known documents relating to the village bear date 914.

**MONUMENT TO SIR CHARLES NAPIER.**—A beautiful memorial monument to the memory of the late Admiral Sir Charles Napier has just been erected in St. Paul's Cathedral, near the north entrance. It is composed of white marble. In the centre of the monument, supported on both sides by flags inscribed with the names of the engagements in which the late Admiral figured—Martinique, Ponza, Potomac, Cape St. Vincent, D'Journ, Boharsee, Sidon, Acre, Baltic, and Bomarsund—is a half-figure of Sir Charles, the likeness being very striking. Immediately underneath is the following inscription:—"Charles Napier, M.P. Admiral, Count Napier St. Vincent. Born 1786, died 1860."

## SCIENCE.

**A NEW SILVER ORE.**—A new mineral called parisite, was discovered in the district of Mono, California, by Dr. Paris in 1865; it has recently been analysed by Professor Arent, and yields 6.12 per cent of oxide of silver.

It is announced that a German chemist has discovered a method of converting wood spirit into spirit of wine. The details are not yet made public, but the discovery, if really made, is an important one.

An attempt, it is said, is about to be made to cross the Atlantic in a balloon. The bold adventurer is M. Alexander Chevalier, a well-known aeronaut, and he expects to make the journey in three days and nights. He will start from New York.

**NEW METALLIC THERMOMETER.**—Mr. John Browning recently exhibited a new metallic self-registering thermometer, made for the Astronomer Royal. It consists of a long compound metallic bar, which acts upon two indicators of aluminum about six inches long. The latter move over two dials, one of which registers the maximum, the other the minimum temperature.

**THE SURE SIGN OF DEATH.**—The Marquis d'Ourches, by his will, founded a prize of 20,000*fr.* for the discovery of a sure and simple means of recognising if death be real or apparent. Dr. Carrière intends to claim the money for a process which he has employed for forty years. The system consists in placing the hand, with the fingers closed, before the flame of a lamp or candle. In the living person the members are transparent and of a pinkish colour, showing the capillary circulation and life in full activity; whilst in that of a corpse, on the contrary, all is dull and dark, presenting neither sign of existence nor trace of the blood current.

**THE SOLAR ENVELOPE.**—The sea of fire around the sun is subject to great changes of apparent level and abrupt irregularities; but whether these changes argue the transmission of actual matter from one height to another, or whether they only argue irregularity in a heat-producing agent, is still an open question, probably, however, we cannot go far wrong if we imagine that this sea of fire is frightfully tempestuous in the ordinary sense of the word. This is confirmed by the photograph of one of the red flames taken by Major Tennant during the late eclipse, which exhibits traces of a structural and even spiral form, giving the idea of an actual carriage of matter.

**TREASURE TROVE AT HAMPSHIRE.**—The other day, while engaged in digging the foundation of the new Home for Sailors' Orphans between Church-row and High-street, Hampstead, a working man came upon a leaden coin, about two feet below the surface, in a bed of loam and clay. It is about an inch and a half in diameter, and on inspection it turned out to be a "Bull" of Pope Innocent IV., one of the well-known family of Fiesco, who sat in the chair of St. Peter from A.D. 1243 to 1254. The "bull" bears on the reverse the figures of St. Peter and St. Paul, and is in a tolerable state of preservation; and we understand that it is likely to be secured for the British Museum.

**THE SUN.**—Since the discovery that the red flames (as we are entitled to call them now) can be examined at any time the sun is visible, the extreme interest with which physicists have hitherto looked forward to a total eclipse will be somewhat abated. It may, however, be worth recording that, on the 7th

August next, there will be a total eclipse of the sun visible in North America. The path of totality, about one hundred miles in width, will pass through Alaska, lat. 60 deg. 46.9 min. north, long. 68 deg. 4.6 min. west of Washington, on Saturday noon; crossing British America, it will again enter the United States territory near the head of Milk River, long. 80 deg. W., pass through the south-west corner of Minnesota, crossing the Mississippi river near Burlington, Iowa, the state of Illinois just north of Springfield, and the Ohio river near Louisville. From thence it will run, in a south-easterly direction, through the states of Kentucky and North Carolina, and reach the Atlantic Ocean near Beaufort, North Carolina, at about sunset. North and south of this line the eclipse will be partial throughout the United States. The American photographers are already organising arrangements to bring every available telescope into use on that occasion for photographic purposes, and intend securing photographs along as many points of the path as possible.

## FOULING OF SHIPS' BOTTOMS.

So many and multifarious plans have of late years been experimented on in the Navy for preventing the fouling of ships' bottoms by incrustations produced principally through marine animals adhering to them, that I should scarcely venture to suggest another, were it not, at the same time, so simple, so free from cost, and, as I believe, so likely to prove serviceable, that no harm can accrue even should it altogether fail.

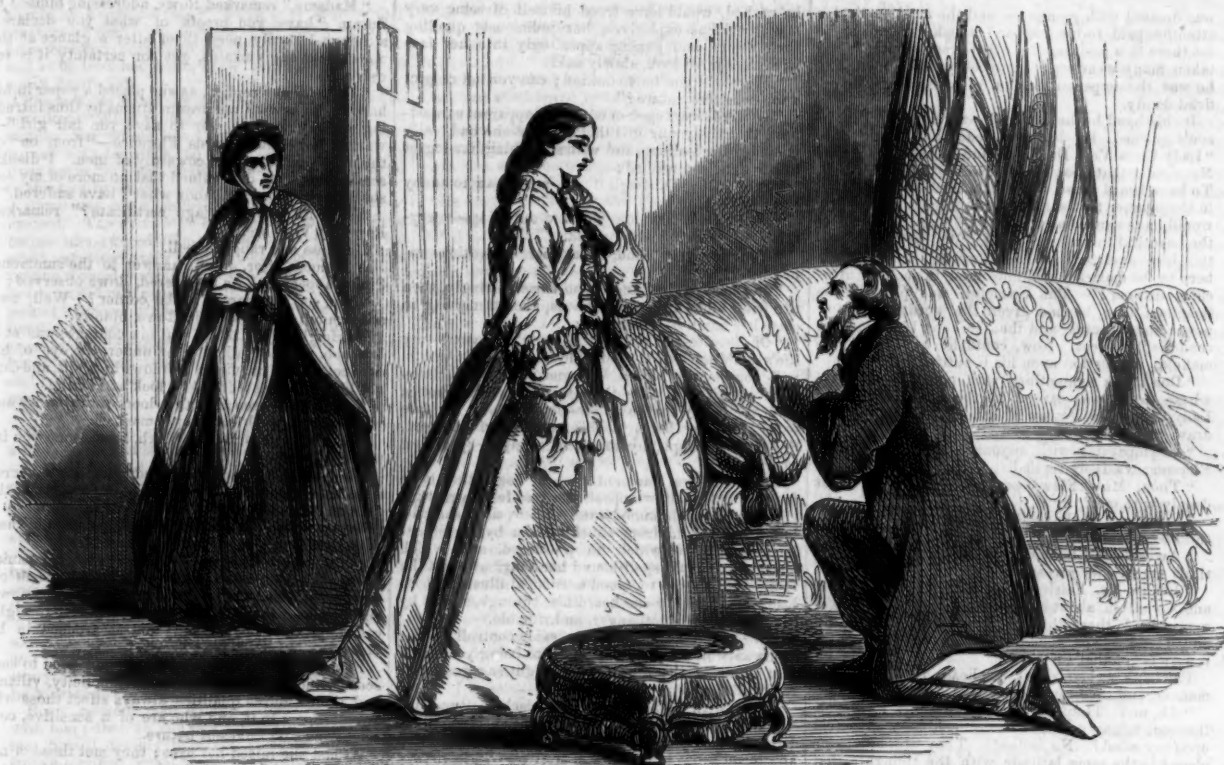
It is a fact well known to naturalists that nearly all marine animals die almost instantly if placed in fresh water. Indeed, fresh water appears to act upon them like a specific poison. What I propose is, that every ship, after coming into port, should be berthed for a brief period in a freshwater dock. Even if mussels, barnacles, and the like, do not become disengaged by the change, they would in all probability die, and their increase, either by growth or reproduction, both of which processes go on with extraordinary rapidity, would, at all events, be completely checked.—G. C. W.

**DEEP AND SHALLOW DRAINAGE.**—I observe that after a dry summer, the fields drained 5 feet deep at 30 and 40 feet apart, in stiff clay, do not discharge water through the drains so early in the season as those of 30 inches deep, at closer intervals. The reason appears to me to be obvious. The 60-inch drains take the surplus water from 6,000 tons of earth, the 30-inch drains only lay dry 3,000 tons. It is easy, therefore, to understand that when the autumn rains come, the 6,000 tons take longer to supersaturate than the 3,000 tons. The deep drained lands had only commenced running to-day (Jan. 8), after the recent heavy rains. Are not those extra 3,000 tons more available for the roots of plants than the same quantity undrained under the 30-inch drains?—for the roots of plants descend several feet. P.S.—One inch deep of earth gives over 100 tons per acre.—I. MECHI, Jan. 8, 1869.

**INVENTION FOR RESCUING PERSONS FROM UNDER ICE.**—A new machine for rescuing persons who may fall through ice on lochs or rivers, was brought under the notice of the Edinburgh magistrates recently, by the inventor, Mr. Wotherpoon, merchant, Leith. The new invention appears to be a decided improvement on the old system, inasmuch as will be more easily worked, has a greater number of appliances, and yet is of very simple construction. The frame of the machine resembles a ladder, with the spars so far apart that a person may be pulled through between them. In the centre of the ladder is a platform about eighteen inches in breadth, running from end to end, on which the persons in charge may walk about with safety—the entire machine forming, as it were, a kind of raft. The machine is fitted on castors, so that it may run smoothly over the ice. The machine, in size about 50 feet in length and 5 or 6 feet in breadth, may be constructed at a cost of 9*l.* or 10*l.*

**EFFECTS OF COLOUR ON DISEASE.**—The power of colours on disease, once supposed to exist, may be considered as a branch of sympathetic medicine. White substances were considered refrigerant, and red ones heating. Red flowers were given for disease of the blood, and yellow for the bile. In small-pox, red coverings, bed curtains, &c., were used to bring out the eruption. The patient was only to look at the red substances, and his drink was coloured red. The physician of Edward II. treated the king's son successfully by this rule; and as lately as 1765, the Emperor Francis I., when sick of the small-pox, was, by the order of his physicians, rolled up in a scarlet cloth; but he died notwithstanding. Flannel, nine times dyed blue, was used for glandular swellings. To this day the tradition remains that certain colours are good for certain disorders. Thousands of people believe that red flannel is better than white for rheumatism. A red string worn round the neck is a common preventive of nose-bleeding.





[A DECLARATION OVERHEARD.]

## FAIRLEIGH; OR, THE SANKER'S SECRET.

### CHAPTER XVI.

LUKE GIBBONS commanded the dog to lie down, and then called:

"Drawler!"

The gentleman honoured with this not inappropriate title arose to his feet.

Gibbons threw a small bundle of papers towards him, and said:

"To-morrow you go to —. Those papers tell you what you are to do there, and mind you do it well. Do ye understand, eh?"

"I will try," Fairleigh timidly replied.

"Try!" thundered Gibbons. "Say you will do it; if you don't, I will let Dayton catch you."

"I will," answered Fairleigh, shuddering at the sound of the name.

Fairleigh kept silent a short time, then he said with some hesitation.

"Captain, there was a fellow, a great friend to Clarence Ormsby, who —"

"Well, what of him, eh?" demanded Gibbons, who was impatient at his prolixity.

"Why, ahem! I thought he would be a formidable rival to me in my suit."

"Why didn't you put him out of the way, then?"

"I did not know but that you might assist me."

"Sit down, and do as I say, or I'll break every bone in your body, eh."

Fairleigh felt very disagreeable, and the feeling was not at all mitigated by the laughter and ridicule of the men. He was the latest addition to the gang and also the youngest, and had not been long enough in the profession to coolly blow brains out. His limited experience—limited in comparison with the others—had only taught him to that degree which admitted of his playing a skilful confidence game, or picking a man's pocket. The latter he practised on a small scale, and when the chances of detection were obscure, for it was not advisable to be known to the officers as belonging to that class, lest, when in society, which he entered by forged letters, he might be exposed.

To do justice to Fairleigh, the life which he now led was distasteful to him. If he could have had money, and enough, any other way, he would not have entered upon it. But repenting was time lost; he had taken the oath; if he broke it, he knew what to expect, and he was obliged to make a virtue of

necessity. He sat in moody silence, noticing no one, and he was pleased that his companions conferred the same favour upon him.

For an hour or more Gibbons continued to question the men as to their whereabouts and actions, none of which bear at all upon my story, so I will not transcribe them.

During this time, Belcher had returned to consciousness, and sat quiet, gazing vacantly around with a dull, dreamy stare.

After giving Albert Fairleigh a few more cautionary remarks, Gibbons dismissed the men, and took himself back to his retreat, through the same devious passage he had come.

He went along chuckling. He had an idea, and it seemed to please him very much, if one could judge by the diabolical smiles that wreathed his distorted features. He lay down upon the floor of his room, and his last words before he fell to sleep were:

"I'll give 'em one more trial, and then sweep them from the face of the earth! Luke Gibbons thou art king!"

### CHAPTER XVII.

THE season at Brighton was drawing to a close. Accordingly, Mr. Ormsby and his family—Mr. Rowe still with them—left the rolling waves and pretty cottages for the more densely-populated town and splendid mansion.

Mr. Rowe still remained in the company of the fair Florence. He had often broached the subject of departure, and had as often been turned from it by the fair girl's coaxing and her brother's protestations. Indeed, both Mr. Ormsby and his wife had become quite attached to the young man, and looked with deprecation even upon a proposal of departure. Lately he had seemed to act more like himself, and had held many hours of conversation with Mrs. Ormsby, who appreciated his worth, admired him for his manly qualities, and enjoyed his company. To use her own words, in a remark she made to her husband:

"Clarence did not overrate his friend's powers by his enthusiastic description."

This, of course, was gratifying to Mr. Rowe, but still he felt that he was staying too long, that he was neglecting his profession. But fate held him; he desired to go, but yet was withheld from doing so by some mystic power. He struggled with it, fought against it, and remained.

Something which was very disagreeable to him and caused him many hours of pain and jealousy, were the visits of Mr. Albert Fairleigh to the house,

which, since their return from Brighton, had become quite frequent. He could not tell for the life of him how it was that the parents would allow this man to visit their child, and, worse, why she would receive him.

Florence's parents knew of nothing which cast the slightest shade upon the character of Mr. Albert Fairleigh. He was admitted to the best society, reputed to be worth a great deal of money, and appeared to be a gentleman. As to his frivolity and foppishness, why they were qualities a great many young men possessed, especially among the *beau-monde*. In view of these facts they could make no objections, and it was passed over in silence.

Rowe pondered many hours over Mr. Fairleigh's sudden departure from Brighton. What did it mean? He had a vague suspicion in his mind that all was not right, yet it was but a suspicion, and availed him nothing. Still he continued thinking upon it. Another fact, taken in connection with that, made it more mysterious and perplexing. The night that Fairleigh left, as will be remembered, the young men were in the hotel conversing with Mr. Hardman, and the latter had partially promised to meet them at the cottage upon the day following. That night Mr. Hardman disappeared; no one at the hotel knew aught with regard to him, he had paid his bill a short time after the young man left, and since then had not been seen.

Could Mr. Hardman and Fairleigh be playing a game together—were they co-schemers? This was the question that Rowe asked himself; then he rejected the thought with scorn. It was an utter impossibility that two men so dissimilar in character and tastes could have anything in common together; they could mix no more than oil and water. Thus he thought, long and wearily, but his reflections availed him nothing; all he knew, and he knew that to his satisfaction, was that Fairleigh was no good.

It is not strange that on this particular afternoon thoughts of the above-named individual should occupy his mind, for he knew that that gentleman was, at that very moment, in the drawing room with Florence, and this did not tend to render Rowe's feelings any sweeter towards him.

Let us leave him and his perturbed thoughts, and direct our attention to the inmates of the drawing-room.

Upon a low chair sat Florence, beautifully yet simply attired. Her face wore a listless expression almost amounting to languor, which was something very rare with her, as she was generally full of animation.

At her feet, upon a hassock, sat Fairleigh. He

was dressed with great care, and the most particular attention paid to his hair and whiskers; and, as he sat there in a position of studied grace, which it had taken many wearisome hours of practice to attain, he was the impersonification of a brainless, superficial dandy.

In his hand he held a book—a volume of Tennyson's poems. He had just read that poetic gem, "Lady Clara Vere De Vere," and in such a manner! No wonder that poor Floss looked listless and weary. To have heard those words mouthed and mumbled in the manner that she had been obliged to listen to, would have caused any person of fine conception of the beautiful to groan in spirit. Well might the author have exclaimed, "Great heavens, was my muse born to be mangled and murdered in such an atrocious manner?" But Fairleigh was pleased; he imagined that he had given the words their full power and meaning, and then he knew his voice was remarkably sweet. Now, could he have failed to make an impression upon his beautiful listener?

"Don't you sympathise with poor Lawrence, whose death was caused by the heartlessness of Lady Clara De Vewaw?" asked Fairleigh, with a drawl and a sigh.

"I sympathise with anyone who is oppressed," Florence evasively replied.

"Then, Miss Florence, you sympathise most deeply with me."

"How, pray?" she replied, in her innocence, never thinking of the depth of his remarks.

"Aw—ahem, I fear if I should tell you, you would think me wewy presumptuous."

"Really, Mr. Fairleigh, what is all this stinging and hesitation about?" she queried, with astonishment; and then, thinking a moment, laughingly added: "Perhaps your favourite actress had left the town; is not that the case?"

Fairleigh sighed, shook his head in a despairing manner, and then replied:

"Ah, no! Think you, myself, Miss Florence, that such minuscule considerations could have any effect upon my mind? No indeed! They are not to be placed in the same latitude with the thoughts that distract me."

"Oh, dear, you are not going distracted, I hope? Why I shall be frightened. I pray you calm yourself, or I shall ring for a servant," replied Florence, with an assumption of coquettishness which was foreign to her.

"No! Gwacious, no indeed! You completely misunderstand me, you unintentionally mis-construe my words," he rejoined, gazing very dejectedly at the carpet.

"Well, then, what are you afflicted with? You look as though you had lost every friend in the world," she remarked, changing her manner, and infusing a petulant tone into her words.

He raised his head and smiled, gazed tenderly upon her, and then answered:

"Oh, my dear Miss Florence, shall I tell you?"

"If it will benefit you, you may; though I cannot see what business it is of mine," she brusquely replied, disgusted at his affectation and want of manliness.

"Oh, you awaw not offended, awaw you? Do not speak so harshly," he pleaded.

She laughed:

"Why, Mr. Fairleigh, you act like a child. What can possess you?"

"You aw sawcasm in wewy ewnel, and you awaw disposed to widicule me," he responded, in a low, pained tone.

Again she laughed. The merry echoes rippled through the hall, and were wafted to the ears of Rowe, who, as he heard them, sprang to his feet and walked the room, controlled by jealousy and anger at his rival.

Fairleigh turned his head away to hide the discomfort that this movement brought out upon his features.

"Well, Mr. Fairleigh, have you gone to sleep?" was her next interrogatory, in the most provoking of tones.

"You aw ewnelly will kill me," he moaned.

"Oh, I hope not. Oh, what a dreadful thing it would be, Mr. Fairleigh; just think of it! Dear me, how sad I should feel," and she lifted her handkerchief to her eyes in mock grief.

She knew the shallow kind of man she had to deal with, and acted accordingly.

"Oh, if you only would," he said, raising his eyes with a melancholy smile. "It would wepay me to die, to know that you mourned—"

"Oh, Mr. Fairleigh, what a pretty speech. Did you extract the idea from Pope or Shelley—which? Or perhaps you heard it in the last sensational drama, it sounds real stagelike, now doesn't it?"

And the little beauty cast her curls aside, quizzing him in a triumphant manner.

Mr. Albert Fairleigh, if he could have done as

he wished, would have freed himself of some very magnificent expletives, but judiciously quelling such desire, and gazing appealingly into her face with an injured look, slowly said:

"Why will you be so unkind; can you not respect a too-sensitive nature?"

The words were spoken with such apparent earnestness, that the young girl thought that she had really wounded his feelings, and with something like regret in her tone, she replied:

"Really, Mr. Fairleigh, I did not mean to annoy you; pardon me."

"Oh, I could pawdon you aw anything—everything!" he rapturously replied.

"You are very kind," was her contentious rejoinder.

For a moment he gazed upon her admiringly, then throwing himself upon his knees, and attempting to clasp her hand, he exclaimed:

"Oh, loveliest of women! My soul's adored—my life's ambition—my dear Florence—my darling! will you be my wife? Let one sweet word drop from your lips, like the breath of some exotics upon the balmy southwain air—let that seal my fate—my life—my hope, in this world and the next. Speak, my awawp, my angel, my awymphe—speak and say yes!"

From that first moment that he began the above flowery and shallow appeal, she had felt a great inclination to laugh immoderately. Surprised she was, but was withheld from shocking him by the ridiculous appearance which he presented, and which charmed and held spell-bound her imagination at the ludicrous. 'Twas too good a comical illustration to lose; consequently she heard him through, moved by feelings of contempt, anger, and ridicule.

"Rise, Mr. Fairleigh," she said, controlling her voice as well as possible. "As to being your wife, that is out of the question—I might say, preposterously absurd."

"Fair girl, you have acted wisely," sounded a deep, rich-toned voice, which caused Mr. Albert Fairleigh to quake and tremble, while curses sharp and bitter arose in his throat.

Ere Florence had time to speak, a tall, noble-looking woman hastily advanced, her dark eyes flashing, and her majestic figure drawn to its full height. Halting, while an expression of the most supreme and withering scorn rested upon her features, she raised her arm and pointed her forefinger at Fairleigh, who stood cowering in the corner.

"What does this mean?" gasped Florence, amazed and frightened at the sudden entrance and tragic manner of the woman.

Fairleigh, by a great effort, managed to ejaculate, in husky tones:

"The woman is a lunatic. I have met her before. She is wawy."

"Silence, knave!" she commanded, advancing and shaking her finger menacingly in his face, and then exclaimed, while her glorious eyes blazed: "Miss Florence, this apology for a man is my husband. He would have ruined your life, had it been in his power, as he has mine. But I have tracked him, and, thank heaven, I have foiled him!"

As the last echo of her voice died away, Charles Rowe stepped into the room. He paused, gazed with wonder upon the scene, and then directed a flashing, scornful look upon Fairleigh. The latter gentleman, wishing to make his case as good as possible, endeavoured to straighten his shrinking form, and feebly broke forth:

"It's false! It's a plot to ruin me! Do not believe it."

"Look at him," continued Susan, for it was she, "look at him, I say; notice his agitation, see the guilt written upon his countenance, and then tell me if that abject, forlorn coward is telling the truth."

All this time poor little Floss had been undergoing martyrdom. Surprise, fear, horror, and excitement had held her dumb. Raising her eyes she saw Mr. Rowe; a smile of relief flitted over her pale face, and she said:

"Oh, Charles, this is all so strange! Come and protect me from these two people; they are nearly wild."

In her perturbation she knew not whether she addressed her friend by his first name or last.

Like an electric shock that one word—his first name—sent the warm blood tingling through every vein in his body; and the look and tone that accompanied it! Oh, joy! it sounded on his ear like angel music. These sensations held him for a moment, and then advancing, he beckoned her to a *à-la-tête*, and sat down beside her.

Albert Fairleigh was vanquished. The news would spread like wildfire; his confidence games were at an end. If he had had courage enough he would have annihilated the woman; but he had not, and consequently he trembled and twitched, now and then giving vent to faint monosyllabic utterances.

"Madame," remarked Rowe, addressing himself to Susan, "have you proofs of what you declare? although I hardly need them after a glance at the object near the curtains, yet for certainty it is required."

"I have," she replied, as she placed a paper in his hands. "I know I am presumptuous by thus intruding, but my purpose was to save you fair girl"—waving her hand towards Florence—"from one of the most scheming and cowardly of men. I dislike scenes, but I am determined that no more of my sex shall endure from his hands what I have suffered."

"This is your marriage certificate?" remarked Rowe. "Very well."

He arose and rang the bell.

A moment after, and in answer to the summons, Simon appeared. As he entered, Rowe observed: "You see that person in the corner? Well, now see him out at doors," said Rowe, bluntly.

Fairleigh's eyes flashed, but his courage was at a low ebb, and he walked along under the eye of his conductor, a convict who knows his guilt, and cannot help showing it in every look and action.

As Fairleigh reached the door, Rowe arose and with a snarl, mock courtesy remarked:

"Good-day, Miss aw Fairleigh, I presume you intend emigrating."

The remark, perhaps not indelicate, and savoured a little of resentment; but he could not resist the temptation to fling a parting shaft of sarcasm.

Susan remained a few moments longer, and then, with another apology, took her departure.

For a moment neither Florence nor her companion spoke. He was heartily glad that the affair had occurred, that the man's real character might be known, and that he might be the victim of Fairleigh's company, and the jealousy that it aroused in his breast.

Florence was still pale; she was not used to such scenes, and it had affected her as duplicity, villany, and their kindred qualities always affect those who are strangers to it, and who are of a sensitive, conscientious, and innocent nature.

At last she raised her eyes; they met those of her companion, which were fixed upon her with a look of mingled solicitude and regard. He dropped his eyes in confusion; he had been gazing upon her, rapt in his own thoughts, so much so that the awakening was like being roused from a dream.

The colour came to her cheeks, and, as if to drive their mutual embarrassment away, she said, somewhat hastily:

"Mr. Rowe, are you not greatly surprised at the disclosure, and events to which we have both been involuntary witnesses?"

"No, I am not," he answered; "I should not be astonished at anything which might transpire in connection with that man."

She regarded him inquiringly, and then continued: "If you had known his character to be bad, you should have informed me."

"Ah, but Florence—I beg pardon, Miss Ormsby—I did not know it. I had no proof of it, 'twas merely a suspicion."

"What caused you to suspect him?"

"Again, I must lay myself open. I had not cause sufficient to convince another, although I was satisfied; his face told me the story."

"You are a physiognomist, then?"

"I claim no power in that respect; yet I often satisfy myself of a person's character by studying their features."

"It is a quality which I wish I possessed. But when did you first make up your mind with regard to him?"

"The first day that I ever saw him—at Brighton."

"Ah!" exclaimed Florence, a thought flashing through her mind and showing itself upon her features; "then that was the reason that you would not go down the beach with us; your headache was part of the excuse, the other part was dislike of him—say, was it not so?" And her eyes sparkled as she awaited the reply.

When she first commenced speaking, Rowe felt that the truth must be exposed. Would she imagine that the real feeling was jealousy? He was afraid so, and was relieved when he heard her concluding words.

"I must confess that you have in part stated the correct reason," rejoined Rowe.

That clause "in part," why did he say that? It was a *lapis linguis*, but he would not recall it. As he expected, she innocently queried:

"And what other reason? You say that was only a part."

"Oh, it's not of the slightest consequence, I assure you."

"But tell me, please tell me," she pleaded, in that coaxing voice she had before used to such effect, and which was so hard to resist.

Should he tell her? It was a great temptation,



should he know his fate? Blind love impetuously answered "yes." Oh, how his heart beat? What intense emotion enveloped his being and disclosed itself as he took her hand, drew nearer, attempted to speak, but failed.

She saw his embarrassment—his looks could not be mistaken. What should she do? The warm blood suffused her whole face; she attempted to rise, but moved not; his eyes, so powerful and kind, were fixed upon her; she could not stir; she was rooted to the spot by an invisible hand.

Rowe was every moment growing more and more excited. The great love he bore the beautiful being before him surged like an angry sea through his mind, carrying every other thought before it. His tongue seemed powerless; the suspense was dreadful, but he could not amellorate it. He looked at Florence; her eyes were cast down, and the lit-white hand that rested in his trembled perceptibly. He must break this spell. With an effort he collected his thoughts and managed to articulate, in a voice low and tremulous, as if some great weight was pressing upon his lungs.

"Florence!" She raised her eyes, saw his bent upon her with a look of the tenderest affection. Hark! she heard a voice in the hall; it seemed to forebode evil. In a moment low voices were heard.

Slowly her power seemed to return, she could not remain quiet, and hastily arose, her face wearing an expression of fear though she knew not why.

At that moment two servants entered bearing the inanimate form of Ralph Ormsby. His face was pale and covered with blood, which flowed from a wound in the head.

Rowe seemed as one in a dream, so quick had the scene changed, and his hope been deferred, that he was almost bewildered. The sight of the blood drove everything else from his mind, and arousing himself, he hurried to the banker's assistance.

For a moment poor Florence had been stupefied with fear; then as she saw the dread spectacle, her face turned deathly pale, and in sharp, quick gasps from a terrified breast, came the words:

"My father! Oh, my father!"  
(To be continued.)

## SOMETIMES SAPHIRE SOMETIMES PALE.

By J. R. LITTLEPAGE.

### CHAPTER XXII.

Oh, mighty god, thou second cause of fate,  
Thou blood-sought blessing, honour-purchased prize,  
Thou precious nourisher of fierce debate,  
Thou idol of our souls, and joy of eyes,  
Great mistress of our passions, price of vows,  
The gladdened world thy rightful way allows.

Theobald.

A GAY troop of ladies, radiant in youth, health, and bright dresses, came smiling and chattering across the chapel, and crowded about Miss Lamotte and Oscar Arkwright.

"Come, Cathleen," they said, "why you look like all the woes; what melancholy and sentimental reflections have been engrossing you? The Earl of Beechfield has just arrived, and Sir Random Racket is playing billiards with him for terribly high stakes; come and watch their game, there will be just time before the dressing-bell rings."

And Cathleen was led away by her lively visitors. Oscar was left standing lonely and disconsolate by the altar railings. Many of the young ladies were titled, all of them had that indescribable, haughty manner, which put Oscar away from their circle without insulting him in any offensive way. At the same time he chafed, he cursed inwardly the pride of these Lamottes, who compelled him to take the place of steward in their household, without remembering that he was the nephew of the rector of St. Edmond's.

"They would never condescend to ask me to dine with them," muttered Oscar to himself. "They have never introduced me to their visitors, who regard me as a species of upper-servant. Bah! never mind, I can wait. I must go up to the Stone House now, and have some conversation with old Gray. I have too long delayed the taking down with pen and ink, the particulars of that very remarkable event which transpired more than twenty years ago in the 'Haven' Inn, at the quaint and picturesque town of Upfield. Ah, ha! my Lady, Cathleen, and my stately squire, who called me 'My good fellow,' the other day, as if I had been a carpenter employed about the house, your time is drawing very close; but I must go on and see old Gray."

Oscar went into the small sitting-room which he occupied with Earnshaw, while the house was turned upside down through the Christmas arrangements. A

large bunch of holly was nailed over the mantelshelf. He made a grimace at the emblem of rejoicing.

"I hate all this stuff and rubbish," he said, very passionately. "When I once become master of Dungarvon Towers, I will have none of it. Madame Cathleen shall learn obedience. I will tame her as completely, as thoroughly, as ever the Shrew of Will Shakespeare's play was tamed. She shan't fill the house with Christmas visitors, and I will have no nonsense with the poor, no coals, no soup-kitchen, no blankets—hollo!"

He stopped short, for one of the men servants had just entered, and might have overheard his soliloquy.

"Ah, James," he said, with a bland smile, "please to bring me a chop, or a little cold meat—anything, for I have to take a long walk over the moor, and may even sleep out all night."

"You can have a slice out of the cold round, sir," said James.

"All right; will you bring it here quickly, and some Christmas ale, and a mince pie, if you have one."

James withdrew, and Oscar went into his bed-chamber, which led out of the sitting-room; there he made a few alterations in his attire, drew on a high pair of walking boots, and equipped himself in a large thick overcoat; then he returned to the sitting-room, where James had already spread out the refreshment.

Oscar stood up to eat the sandwiches and to drink the ale, he was in haste to be gone, for the winter afternoon was rapidly closing in.

Soon placing a thick felt cap on his head, and enveloping his hands in warm gloves, he set out from Dungarvon Towers, crossed the park, reached the hawthorn fence, and found himself speedily on the moorland. Twilight deepened, and all at once the crescent moon came out of the white bosom of a glory cloud, and looked down at him like a bright, fearless, innocent child.

"I have set my will on becoming the master of Dungarvon Towers," he muttered, between his close shut teeth, "and nothing shall stand in my way—nothing. If Madame Kate is wayward, which is more than likely, why Madame Kate must be silenced. I am very much afraid that I am beginning to hate that girl; she is such an awful impediment in my way—she had better be patient and humble, and do as she is bid. Ah, she had better."

A wind, chilling as the breath of the icy north, sprang up, and assailed Oscar, making him shudder to the very heart.

"Ah!" he said to himself, "when I am master of Dungarvon, I won't turn out in the cold on winter nights that I may look after business affairs—no, no—a little diplomacy, a few bold strokes, and I shall have earned for myself a princely fortune, and a magnificent wife, fit to be a queen."

Thus he talked within himself, and kept up his courage, and his hopes, during that bleak walk. He went along at a brisk, swinging pace, and he soon passed over the four miles of ground which led to the lane, where stood the Stone House.

The half-moon was glinting in the cold sky, as he approached the dwelling, the broken-down gate looked more dilapidated and forlorn than ever, the whole aspect of the dwelling, with its broken window panes and crazy roof, more dreary, desolate, and sinister than ever.

He went on to the house, and stood back on the moss-grown gravel path, to stare up at the window of the room which old Gray occupied.

There was a light burning, he could see, dimly, through the closely-drawn green curtains. He then went round to the back of the house, and in the yard, damp, untidy, and littered with the wet, dead leaves of the past summer, he stood, and threw up a handful of small gravel at a window where a light was burning.

Almost at once his summons was answered. Footsteps sounded upon the back stairs, the kitchen door fell back, and there appeared before the gaze of Oscar, a peculiar old woman, bent almost double. Her nose and chin nearly met; she wore a red kerchief about her gray head, in the fashion of some of the French fishwoman; her eyes were piercing, black, and suspicious.

"Hullo!" she said, "so you have come at last: time enough for you, I think."

Oscar entered the kitchen without responding to the old woman's remark. There was a very poor fire, nearly dying out, in the grate. The young man seized a poker and lustily stirred the coals. A faint flame went flickering out of them.

"It's cold enough to freeze the marrow in one's bones," said Oscar, peevishly. "Why, in heaven's name! don't you keep up a decent fire, such nights as these, Mother Michael?"

For this odd-looking old dame was none other, be it known, than Mother Michael, of the sweet-shop in St. Edmond's, who was mentioned by Master Viner, as telling people's fortunes in the grounds of tea.

"I have to be upstairs with her, poor young creature," responded Mother Michael, in a deep tone of indignation, "and to think, Mr. Arkwright, that you don't so much as ask how she is, and she, your own wife in the sight of heaven and man; married to you honestly in London, and obliged when she comes to have a baby to give it out, that she's ill of fever, and sends for me to nurse her, and tells me the truth, when I was shocked to see her condition, having known her from a child."

Oscar's face became livid with passion, when the talkative old woman spoke thus—for a short space concentrated wrath, and surprise held him dumb, his eyes became white as sheet lightning, he seized the old woman by the shoulder, held one hand over her mouth to stop her cries, and shook her with the other until she had scarcely any breath left.

"Oh, you horrible old witch," he burst forth, at length, "if you dare, dare to repeat one word which that creature has told you, I will bring a charge against you, and send you to the treadmill for life. Show me to her room at once, and if you listen at the door, I'll have you hanged at next Upfield Assizes."

Old Mother Michael was seized with a tremendous fit of coughing, in consequence of the shaking, and while she was suffocating and struggling, Oscar had time to collect his thoughts and calm his rage; he saw what a fearful enemy Mother Michael might be, and he resolved to conciliate her.

He took out his purse, and at once offered two sovereigns to Mother Michael.

"For pity's sake," said the young man, "mention nothing of what this foolish Kate has told you. If our marriage was known it would ruin us both. My uncle, the rector, would never forgive me."

Mother Michael, still half choking, clutched with an old greedy woman's instinct at the two bright gold coins. She was not a wicked person, but it seemed to her that to be silent, thoughtful, discreet, and forgiving was no bad conduct.

"I'll never say a word," she gasped out.

Oscar smiled with contempt.

"And now tell me who is in the room with old Mr. Grey," he said, to the old dame.

"His son, Mr. Josh, the miller," replied the woman.

Oscar thought for a moment, then nodding to the old woman, he said:

"I am going out for a few minutes, but shall be back almost directly."

He then left the kitchen, and crept round to the front of the house; he then took off his thick overcoat, and began to climb up the pillars of the porch, from thence to the top of the porch; the window of old Grey's room was just above, and within reach.

Oscar lifted it gently, without making the least noise, entered the room, and stood behind the thick curtains, which were drawn. Peeping through a very slight opening he perceived old Grey sitting up in bed, the damps of death seemed to be on his ghastly face, the arm of Josh, the miller, supported him, and guided his hand upon a closely written sheet of paper.

"Sign your name, sign your name, father," said Josh. "When you are gone, it will be a fortune in my hands. I'll make Lamotte give me twenty thousand pounds."

"Am I balked?" thought Oscar, "has the old man signed it? Now for a struggle with Josh, the miller, a struggle to the very death!"

### CHAPTER XXIII.

So on the tip of his seducing tongue,  
All kinds of arguments and questions deep,  
All replications meet, and reason strong,  
For his advantage, did both wake and sleep;  
Making the weeper laugh, the laugher weep,  
He had the dialect and different still,  
Catching all passions in his craft of will.

Shakespeare.

The feeble fingers of old Grey traced his name upon the wide sheet of paper, and then the pen dropped from the weak grasp, and the old man lay back gasping upon the shoulder of his son. The named signed was yet wet, and Oscar waited breathlessly for it to dry, before he started forward to seize it.

"I am going," moaned the old man. "I am going into the outer darkness. In that darkness I see a shadow with a cruel mark, as if of blood, about its head and brow, like a circlet. It is his form, his poor Lord Henry's. Is there no person, at hand, Josh, who would say a few prayers for a departing soul, a trembling, guilty soul? Christmas time! Will to-morrow, then, be Christmas eve? And this time twenty years we supped at the 'Haven Inn,' at Upfield! We had roast duck for our supper in the snug bar parlour. There was a bunch of holly over the priest that hung above the mantelshelf; it was a print in a wooden frame, a likeness of old King George III., in his cocked hat. I did not think then, Josh, that two

hours later, I should hear my master's voice, calling out to me in mortal agony to save his life, and that I should wait, wait, wait, until I knew that all was over."

The old man here burst into a loud, lamentable cry. Oscar listened to it, quite unmoved; to him there was nothing dreadful in this murder, committed so many years ago; he thought only of the gain the whole affair was likely to bring to him, and he regarded the cries and wails of the conscience-stricken man as so much in the way of business.

Josh was pretty much of the same way of thinking; the miller was a hard, selfish, and covetous man, to whom wealth represented everything valuable and sweet in life.

"I wish you'd cease all that bother," he said, roughly; "the man's dead, and old Lamotte murdered him, and you've got the mill, and I mean to have twenty thousand pounds. If anybody makes a disturbance about the matter it ought to be the squire, he who really and truly committed the crime; but he don't fret and fume, and lead all his friends a life like you do. He fills his house with gay friends, gives Christmas balls, holds his head as high as a prince, and goes out with his gun, as active as if he were thirty-five; he's a sensible man, he is—"

"He has a hard heart," murmured old Grey; "and I, though I did that one wicked deed of keeping silence, have a soft heart, a tender heart, a—"

At this juncture, Oscar stepped suddenly from his hiding-place behind the curtains; a certain movement of Josh, the miller, towards the written sheet had alarmed the rector's nephew. With one spring, one sudden clutch, he had possessed himself of old Mr. Grey's confession, which proved to have been traced upon parchment, not paper, as Oscar had at first supposed.

The wild rage of the brutal Josh was something fearful to behold. Wicked oaths burst from his thick lips, his eyes seemed to start from his head.

Oscar thrust the parchment into his breast pocket, folded his arms, and looked with that fearful pale light in his eyes at his uproarious rival.

Joshua Grey was in too great a passion to find a use for his clumsy giant strength; he, as yet, had not assailed the slight though muscular Oscar with a single blow; his voice was weak and hoarse with cursing.

Then Oscar spoke:

"Calm yourself, Mr. Grey. You have lost nothing, but a vast amount of trouble. I, myself, purpose to undertake all the diplomatic portion of the business. I flatter myself that my college education—I graduated at Cambridge, since my worthy uncle at first intended me for holy orders, and secondly, on abandoning that line, I studied medicine in London at Guy's for a time. I repeat that young as I am, I have seen enough of life and letters, men and manners, to enable me to cope with a gentleman of Squire Lamotte's mental calibre. You, pardon me, are an excellent bargain driver, among the farmers at Upfield, on a market day; but a few keen polished words of Squire Lamotte, would out through your laudable resolutions, like a sharp carving knife would. Whereas I can silence him, coerce him, make him do my bidding. Culture and learning are fine things, Mr. Joshua Grey; believe me, that your twenty thousand pounds are ensured if you will trust me."

The calm demeanour of Oscar, his splendid face, illumined with the power and the light of Lucifer, his long words, many of which the miller did not understand, quite cowed Josh for a time.

"What is it to you?" he asked at length; "how dare you interfere with the Greys and the Lamottes?"

"By this right," responded Oscar, with a magnificent, though wicked, audacity. "I intend to marry old Lamotte's granddaughter. Cathleen Lamotte is to be my wife."

Joshua stared in blank amazement at Oscar.

"And I will pay you twenty-five thousand pounds," pursued the land-steward, calmly, "as soon as the marriage contract is drawn up, which I trust it will be in a few weeks. I do not intend to wait for the death of your respected father, Mr. Joshua. With a little care, some good beef tea and old port wine, the good gentleman may well last another ten years; life is short, Mr. Joshua, and while you and I are waiting, the days that ought to be merry days, golden days, are running away from us, like a dark and melancholy and turbid stream. We must set sail, we must venture upon those troubled waters; believe me they will conduct us to the shores of plenty."

There was a certain power in the tone of Oscar. To Joshua he almost seemed like an evil genius, and the miller at once, without hesitating any longer, succumbed to the influence, and acknowledged his master.

"Twenty-five thousand pounds!" he said, in a gruff voice.

"Twenty-five thousand pounds," repeated Oscar,

blantly, "if you will suffer me to retain peaceable possession of this parchment, and to do battle myself with Squire Lamotte. Here, give me a pen and ink, and I will sign you a promise to pay twenty-five thousand pounds in four months from this time; only, excuse me, your good father appears to be listening; we must disabuse his mind of any knowledge of our little transaction."

Old Grey had indeed lain half fainting during the greater part of the discussion, but now he raised his head and called out:

"More sin—more wrong! Oh, that one bad deed! That's an evil spirit in the room, Josh, clothed in an armour of light. Don't have any dealings with him, lad; don't sign any papers."

"My dear sir, said Oscar, gently, approaching the old man, and taking his withered hand, "allow me, as a student of medicine to take your hand, to feel your pulse—fever, fever! You are under hallucinations; you must drink weak brandy and water, keep quiet, and keep warm—dear me, is that window open? What a terrible draught I feel!" and the clever, handsome hypocrite went behind, and closed the window, which he had opened himself. "Now, I must prescribe rest; Mr. Joshua, rest; but first of all warm brandy and water, to give tone to the blood, which circulates but feebly. Are you better now, dear Mr. Grey?"

"He's a clever chap; he won't miss the mark, muttered Joshua to himself; "only how about the bill for the twenty-five thousand pounds?"

The bill was signed by Oscar, and the two men, the vulgar miller and the polished Oscar, smoked and drank brandy together by the fire in the sick chamber, when old Grey had gone to sleep, and came to a very amicable arrangement touching the wealth of Squire Lamotte and the hand of the heiress. Oscar had, as may be well supposed, the deepest horror of the news of his relations with Kate coming to the uncle's ears. He knew in that case that his dreams of wealth must fade into nothing. He had good reason to tremble then, when he remembered that old Mother Michael held his secret in her keeping.

"I must get those two women out of the county before the week is over," thought Oscar.

He pledged Joshua to the strictest, most solemn secrecy, and Joshua, a silent, moody man, except when he was roaring with rage, was glad to promise that the affair should be guarded.

"You will sleep on the sofa, down in the parlour, to-night, Mr. Arkwright," said Joshua. "Kate is ill with scarlet fever. I suppose you ain't afraid of it, but it upsets my father's house, and you must just take us as you find us; but the old woman will manage blankets for you downstairs. It's cold, and she'll light you a bit of fire."

Oscar thanked the usually surly Josh for his hospitality, and old Mother Michael lighted his fire. Josh occupied a bed in his father's room.

When Oscar found himself alone with the old woman, he whispered to her:

"I am not going to sleep until I have seen Kate. Wait until the house is quiet, and then I shall come to her room."

"Right enough, and proper, too, Mr. Arkwright, seeing that she is your own wife."

"If you mention it, Mother Michael, you will cause both of our deaths," said Oscar.

"I won't mention it, sir, don't fear," said the old woman, with a sniff and a snort. "Only don't you forget it, that's all."

"Old idiot!" muttered Oscar.

About an hour from that time, Oscar knocked gently at the door of his wife's chamber, and was admitted by Mother Michael.

It was a large room, with a low ceiling, a bed in one corner, a few pieces of carpet spread here and there, upon the bare, dark stained boards. In a large arm-chair by the fire sat Kate, propped up with pillows. She wore a long blue dressing-gown, and her bright hair was tucked away under a white lace cap, the light from a shaded lamp fell upon her pale, sweet face, and mournful eyes.

"Oh, Oscar!" cried the girl, wife, "you have come at last; so long—so long as I have waited. Five weeks, Oscar, since I have seen your face."

And, in spite of her efforts, she broke out into weeping.

"My dear Kate," said the schemer, taking her hand coldly, and kissing it, "you should not give way to nervous fancies. I have been too much occupied to enable me to seek you before. I won't kiss you, for I have been smoking—well, and how are you, now?"

"I have passed through a dreadful struggle," said the wife, "and Mr. Oscar, to think that when the baby was born dead, I rejoiced instead of weeping—your little lamb, I knew its father would be sorry to see it, and heaven took it; it never opened its pretty eyes upon this weary wicked world—"

"You are somewhat melancholy in your mood, I

think," said Oscar, listlessly, "but as you must justly observe, it was an infinite mercy that the small personage should have made his appearance in this busy scene in a manner which showed his unwillingness to mingle in the affairs of life. He was decidedly wise to make himself scarce, since there was no welcome for him here below; and pray what became of his mortal remains? I hope they won't turn up under the hearthstone, or in a dark cupboard; it would be slightly awkward and inconvenient."

It is quite impossible to give an adequate idea of the cold, brutal insolence of Oscar's tone and manner. Hatred, absolute hatred, gleamed in his brilliant blue eyes when they rested upon his unhappy wife. She covered her face with her hands and rocked herself to and fro in the extremity of her anguish.

"Oh, Oscar, Oscar," she said, "I only wish it had pleased heaven to take me with my child."

"Most devoutly do I echo that wish," said Oscar to himself, then aloud, "but you have not told me what became of the mortal remains of your son—"

"It was carried out and buried in the field by Nurse Michael," responded Kate, sobbing.

"By the way is that woman so properly deaf as she should be at her age?" asked Oscar, with a wicked frown. "She pretends to be arranging clothes in the linen-press, but I had far rather that you sent her downstairs—I wish to speak to you privately, and very seriously."

"Nurse, would you kindly go downstairs for a few moments?" said Kate.

And the old woman withdrew. When she was once gone, and the door closed safely behind her, Oscar drew his chair up close to that of his wife, and leant forward so as to look fixedly into her face—she shuddered at the pale colour of his savage eyes, she shrank backwards as though she read murder and destruction on his brow.

"You may well be afraid to look me in the face," said the land-steward, in a tone of fury, "when you have betrayed our secret, and placed our fortunes and fate in the hands of that horrible old midwife. After all your promises of secret faithfulness, you basely betray our marriage; but I have made up my mind. I shall quit this county. I shall betake myself to London, where I have heard of a situation in a lawyer's office; and you, madam, shall accompany me. I must now abandon all the fair prospects which had opened before me, as the confidential land-agent of Squire Lamotte. I must submit to a life of drudgery; but you shall share it, madam. You shall share the want, the privations, the mean, miserable London lodgings. Hold yourself in readiness to follow me to London four days after Christmas. Do you hear?"

"Alas," said Kate, "why, why should our marriage upset your fortune with the Lamottes? Let me go myself to the squire, and tell him that we have been honourably married a year."

"If you do," said Oscar, "I will blow out my brains the moment that the confession is made. I swear it, most positively."

"Alas, alas, I cannot understand you. I know not what your schemes are," said Kate, wringing her hands in her misery. "How, how could I keep my secret, when, four weeks ago, I felt the perilous time of my life approach? I dared not have a doctor, but I sent for Nurse Michael. I told our little servant that I had fever, and she must not come near the room. Nurse Michael came, her pain and consternation at my state were something frightful. I was compelled to tell this old woman, who has known me from an innocent child, who knew my poor father, James Grey, and my mother likewise. I was compelled, I say, to tell her that I was a lawful married wife. She attended to me with skill and care; she has taken notes to the post for you, acquainting you with my state. She can read, and she read your address upon the notes. I was obliged to tell her that you were my husband."

"And I wonder how many more of the village gossips know of the interesting romance by this time," sneered Oscar. "Where was your boasted love for me, pray, that you could not bear the vulgar reproaches of a dreadful old witch for a few days. It would be better for your name to be hoisted, as that of a fallen creature, in the parish, than that my name should be dragged down into the dirt, by its association with that vulgar Josh, the miller, your uncle, and your mad grandfather. But I tell you, madam, once for all, I'll have no more of it. You shall have enough of my company now; you shall live in London, and you shall taste that poverty which you have courted, and you shall learn, madam, that if I am husband, I am master, and that I will have obedience, yes, abject obedience, from you. You have perpetually told me, during our disputes, to remember who you were, also that you were my wife. Well now, then, you will have to remember it every day of your life; you shall eat the humblest of humble pie, madam. Do you understand?"

"If you would only love me, Oscar, as you used to



do, and acknowledge me to the world as your wife. I would live in a garret, I would eat dry bread, I would work to support you and you should never hear me utter a murmur."

"An exemplary dame, truly," sneered Oscar; "but I am not able to love a woman who is in love with her own selfish aggrandizement. No, Kate, let us leave sentiment, if you please, and discourse of business. I am going to London the day following Christmas; I will write to you to come up, and I will send you the address. Since you will be lonely, I will have this much consideration for you—you may bring Mother Michael with you, as an attendant, as you are not strong, and you can keep her with you for a week or two; but I command you, upon pain of my instant death, not to divulge the secret of our marriage to a single soul; and you must find some way of stopping the old woman's chatter, I would travel with you, but that would be betraying us; yet now I think of it, we might all go up together from Upfield. We need not speak upon the platform, and we could go in different carriages. Have you not some aunt in town from whom I could send a letter to show to your friends, asking you to spend some weeks with her, as a change after the fever?"

Thus it was all settled: poor loving Kate was in her heart delighted at being permitted to live with her husband, and she flattered herself that, by a constant obedience, she should regain his affections.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

"Prophet," said I, "thing of evil!  
Prophet still, if bird or devil,  
Take thy beak from out my heart,  
And take thy form from off my door!"  
Said the Raven, "Nevermore."

Edgar Allan Poe.

EARNSHAW spent his time in studies, in solitary rambles, in silent musings. Master Albert Viner had a holiday for the whole of the time, and thus the tutor had no duties to perform. He seldom met with Miss Lamotte, and if, by any chance, he encountered her at the breakfast table or at luncheon, he studiously avoided her eyes; he feared to look at them, dreading the scornful light which he expected to read in their dark depths. And meanwhile the gay visitors prattled, and their laughter rang pleasantly through the grand old mansion. Their talk was of theatricals, decorations and the approaching ball.

Christmas day passed sadly enough for our hero. He went to divine service in the castle chapel. Mr. Arkwright, the rector of St. Edmund's, officiated on that day, and Oscar sat among the visitors; Earnshaw in a secluded nook from whence he could watch the fair face of Cathleen unobserved. Was he mistaken, or was that exquisite face wondrous sad? was there a mournful light in the eyes? was the lip compressed and trembling, and once did he dream that a tear trembled on the long silken eyelash?

"I suppose she is disappointed in the ennobling of some new victim," thought Earnshaw, bitterly; "perhaps one of those glittering guardmen is impervious to her wiles, too thick-headed, too devoid of feeling, too stupid, too selfish, to fall in love with anything but his own face in a looking-glass."

Thus disappointment, and the false tongues of others, made Earnshaw judge Miss Lamotte hardly.

Christmas day passed quietly on to the evening, then Earnshaw received a formal invitation from Mrs. Lamotte to join the great company at dinner in the large dining-hall. The young man hesitated about accepting this invite; but at last he determined to go, and look at the gay world assembled to feast at Dungarvon Towers. He went down just as the great bell was sounding. The sight in the great hall almost dazzled him by its glittering splendour, its lavish profusion, its gorgeous assemblage of lovely ladies, dressed in all the brilliant colours which art can devise, or fancy suggest.

The great hall of Dungarvon was only used on great occasions. Its carvings were of oak, its roof was as high as the nave of a small cathedral; around its pillared arches were trimmed holly, ivy, mistletoe, interspersed with winter flowers from the conservatories. The table was covered with covers and dishes of gold; all the treasures of the Dungarvon plate was brought out, as though to dazzle the eyes of the guests. And amid all the galaxy of beauty, grace, and youth, Cathleen Lamotte shone conspicuous, moved as a queen among her compeers, shone as the virgin moon among the lesser lights. Cathleen was pale on this Christmas night; but the wax-like purity of her complexion was brightened by a faint spot of pink upon either cheek, her eyes shone like stars, her raven hair was bound with a flashing band of priceless diamonds. She wore a white moiré, with an under-skirt of pink satin; her arms were bare, and bracelets of enormous diamonds burned upon them.

Oscar Arkwright was fascinated to madness with the beauty of the heiress on that night. It might

have been, it very probably was, that the evidences of supendous wealth which dazzled his eyes, appealed more directly to his covetous nature. Cathleen in her diamonds, Cathleen eating from her golden dishes, was a being for whose sake he would have braved death and shame. And once, just once, did Miss Lamotte raise her eyes to those of Earnshaw during the feast. Amid the noise, the laughter, the repartee, the drawing of corks, the chinking of drinking-cups, the courteous civilities of the stately host, the soft whisperings, the courtly compliments, the wreaths of flowers, the delicious odours of the Christmas fare, Earnshaw had but one thought, and that was intense love, intense displeasure, and indignation towards the queen of the feast. When her eyes sought Earnshaw, she was met in return by a glance from the large eyes of the tutor; a glance, sad, reproachful, proud, stern, full of meaning. And Cathleen, haughty Cathleen, sank back abashed, wounded, wondering.

"Can it be true that he is the dastard they say he is?" thought the heiress, to herself. "That was like the glance of an offended prince; oh, can Miss Leech have misunderstood? but no—Oscar Arkwright tells me the same story."

The dinner passed, and the gay company trooped out into the conservatories, which surrounded the hall on three sides. Instead of going at once to his rooms as he had purposed, Earnshaw wandered about the conservatories; he bowed to the gay groups of ladies whom he met; more than one of them admired the manly grace of his figure, the intellectual beauty of his dark face. At last in a turn of the path he came suddenly upon Cathleen, sitting on a silken seat, placed under the shade of an immense flowering Indian plant, whose scarlet blossoms hung down like bells of coral. To his extreme surprise, Cathleen was weeping. An involuntary exclamation escaped him. Miss Lamotte glanced up at him, dried her eyes, and said, with a strange calmness:

"You have surprised me indulging in a fit of sentiment, sir."

Earnshaw bowed and was retiring silently, when Cathleen called him back.

"Mr. Earnshaw," she said, yielding to a sudden impulse, which she could not control, "Mr. Earnshaw, give me your hand, and let there be peace between us. It is Christmas Day, and I will put the precept of our great teacher into practice. Yes, I will be open with you. Two or three days ago I had made up my mind to punish you, to be avenged; now I forgive, even as I hope to be forgiven."

She had grown pale with the excess of her tender emotion. She extended her hand; an expression, meek, almost holy, came into her lovely face.

In deep amazement Earnshaw took her hand reverently into his.

"I do not know, Miss Lamotte," he said, "what I have done that needs your forgiveness, but—but, I gratefully thank you for your kindness."

"Ah," she said, rising to her feet, "I must tell you what you have done. Mr. Earnshaw, it is part of the nature of Cathleen Lamotte to be very frank. Will you walk with me? We can talk unobserved, and it will be supposed we have some little business connected with the approaching festivities to discuss."

She rose as she spoke, and Earnshaw fancied he was walking in a dream. The flowery branches met over their heads; the perfumes, the lights, the distant sound of music, the beauty of Cathleen, all intoxicated the senses of Earnshaw, his passionate heart grew rebellious, and almost forced his lips to speak the words of love, hopeless, despised, but burning love.

"Mr. Earnshaw," said Cathleen, "I will tell you what I have to forgive. You wished to win my heart, that you might win my gold. Oh, sir, you are not worse than numbers of my mercenary suitors, but you have no idea how painful it is to a woman, a girl full of warm expectations, and romantic fancies, to be met on every side—yes, on every side, with the same cold, cruel disappointment, the same mercenary counting up of her wealth. I had thought you nobler—I had dreamed that for me you entertained a generous friendship."

"And who, Miss Lamotte, has told you otherwise?" asked Earnshaw.

"Alas, sir, it does not matter who! Honour compels me into silence; but this much I may tell you, you have been overheard speaking insultingly of me; saying," added Cathleen, in a voice which had grown weak from emotion, "saying, that in your eyes, I had no charm save my wealth, and that you had come here to win it."

Surprise held poor Earnshaw dumb for a space.

"Miss Lamotte," he said, at length, "your informant spoke falsely. I demand his name. I must confront him."

"To what purpose?" asked Cathleen, quickly.

"The words of my informant may be false, so may

yours. Pardon me, I mean nothing unkind, but if it be false or true it matters not now."

She looked at him sadly. Was she not the promised wife of my Lord Beechfield?

"It does matter, Miss Lamotte," said Earnshaw, in a deep tone. "I would clear myself in your eyes from this most foul aspersion. I am not a worthless miscreant. I am not presumptuous. I would not marry an heiress for the world, poor dependant as I am; not if I loved her well enough to tear out my heart and lay it at her feet."

The pair stood under a lamp, now shaded and wreathed about with evergreen.

Cathleen, looking into the young man's eyes, read such passionate love there, that she shrank as from the blaze of a fierce fire.

At that moment a soft step sounded close behind them, and there stood Miss Leech, smirking, in white muslin, with pearls on her thin neck and in her sandy hair.

Cathleen blushed scarlet at sight of her mother's companion.

"I beg your pardon," said Miss Leech, with a smile, "but they are calling for Mr. Earnshaw to join a party of gentlemen at whist."

Earnshaw glanced quickly at Miss Lamotte, that he might read her commands, and go to whist or not, as she should order him. But Cathleen had plucked a leaf from the clustering ivy, was pulling it into little shreds, and looking down at the ground, her face, rosy with a sweet perplexed confusion; she was afraid of the prying eyes of Miss Leech. She felt that lady would censure her weakness, and set her down in her heart as an idiot, if she listened with any gentleness to the explanations or warm pleadings of Earnshaw. Finding, therefore, that Miss Lamotte did not invite him to remain, Earnshaw bowed to the two ladies, and walked away towards the whist tables in the adjoining apartments.

"Why did you come to interrupt me, Miss Leech?" Cathleen burst forth, piteously, when the young tutor was out of hearing. "He was explaining—"

"I beg your pardon, dearest Miss Lamotte," interrupted Miss Leech, "but really and truly I could not allow you to be made the laughing-stock of the whole company, by your close companionship with a being unworthy of the name of a man. I perceived that you were listening to his words with too much attention, and I flew on the wings of friendship to rescue you from that bad man."

"Miss Leech, let us go and sit upon that seat, under the almond tree," said Cathleen; "it is out of the way, the most secluded spot in all this winter-garden. I wish to speak seriously to you."

The two ladies went accordingly to the sweet little nook, which seemed made expressly for a tête-à-tête. There they seated themselves, and then Cathleen said:

"Do you know, Miss Leech, that I fancy there has been some mistake about Mr. Earnshaw. I feel convinced, in spite of every argument, that he is good and noble. I do think that you must have mistaken his words in the shrubbery."

"Even admitting that," said Miss Leech, with her cold smile, "how can you get over the testimony of Mr. Arkwright himself?—who is quite disgusted with the mercenary and disrespectful manner in which Earnshaw speaks of you; but I have other proof, more incontestable. I picked up a pocket-book last night in the passage, which a little examination proved to belong to the tutor—it bears the initials 'P. E.' in silver raised letters, on the black Russia leather cover. I was guilty perhaps of a breach of conventional honour, but my interest in you was stronger than my sense of delicacy—I opened the note-book—"

"It was a shame!" broke forth Cathleen, her cheeks burning, her lovely eyes blazing, "it was treacherous, mean, dishonourable."

Miss Leech bowed her head very meekly, and smiled more than ever.

"I quite expected all you would say, dear, noble generous Miss Lamotte; but I had rather you despised me—oh, ten thousand times rather—than see you fall a victim to the arts of that designing schemer. I opened the book, and I read several remarks touching yourself, which, I think, will not fail to convince you what kind of a being you have to deal with. Will you look at some of these jottings, or will you permit me to read you one or two in which your name occurs?"

"It is so mean—it is so very mean," said Cathleen, whose torn heart longed, with a sick longing, to learn everything concerning Earnshaw. Miss Leech waited, with her cruel smile, in silence, while Cathleen struggled with her sense of honour. She knew too well how the struggle would end—curiosity, love, impatience would carry the day.

"Well, Miss Leech," said poor Cathleen, at last, "I won't look at the book, but you may read me a little—just a very little—of what seems to strike you as so wicked; perhaps our opinions may differ."

Miss Leech, still smiling, opened the book and read out as follows:

"December 10.—Cold morning; been shooting over the Redhouse Farm of old Lamotte—rich old rascal.—Mem. Wish I could get hold of his income, if it's true it's eighty thousand. Don't care much about being tied to that black-haired Amazon, his granddaughter. We should quarrel like dogs over a bone; but I'd bring down her spirit with a touch of the horsewhip, if needed."

Cathleen had become white to the lips; this brutal, unmanly fashion of alluding to her seemed past belief. For a moment she could not speak, and Miss Leech, still smiling, continued:

"What makes this painfully striking is, that the tenth of December was the day when you had, dearest Miss Lamotte, a rather sentimental conversation in the shrubbery with Mr. Earnshaw. You had been very kind to him, and it seems his heart was not softened towards you in consequence."

"Go on, since you have begun," said Cathleen, speaking hoarsely, "read me another of these interesting memorandums."

"December 23, day before yesterday, dearest Miss Lamotte."

"Don't call me 'dearest Miss Lamotte,' please," interrupted Cathleen; "it annoys me."

"December 28," continued Miss Leech.—"I have come to the conclusion that Miss Lamotte is a tartar. I hate tartars, and yet I mean to make up to her. I must have her eighty thousand a year, but I'll send her to a lunatic asylum if she grows intolerable in temper after a few years; those things are easily managed with money."

"That will do, thank you," said Cathleen, in a cold, strange voice. "I do not think, Miss Leech, that any further comment is necessary; only give me the pocket-book. I should like to return it to Mr. Earnshaw some day, and inform him that I have been favoured by the fates with a peep into his heart."

Miss Leech hesitated.

"You see, Miss Lamotte, he might deny that the pocket-book was his."

"Are you sure it is his?" cried Cathleen, "let me look at it."

Miss Leech gave the book into Miss Lamotte's hands. It was a black book, with the initials P. E. in raised letters of solid silver on the cover.

Miss Lamotte opened it, and read a few pages. Her name did not often occur; the greater portion of the memoranda was incomprehensible to her: it was dated from some time back, and alluded to boxing matches, actresses, wine parties—all the dissipations of a "fast man's" London life. Evidently Earnshaw, the graceful athlete, brave sportsman, handsome student of Dugargon, was acting a part—his London associations must have been low and worthless.

"Yes, he is a hypocrite," said poor Cathleen, returning the pocket-book to Miss Leech. "I am now convinced and I will never doubt again. That man is one who deserves punishment; some days ago I determined, and promised myself that I would punish him—I did it, Miss Leech, in a wicked spirit of revenge, but to-day, this holy Christmas Day, my heart awoke in church to better feelings, and I resolved to forgive the man who had determined to make a wreck of my life. I did forgive him, and now you bring me proof that he is indeed a villain—now, I hope that it is in no revengeful spirit that I resolve to punish Mr. Earnshaw; I feel that I shall only be doing an act of justice if I humble his insolent pride, and I will do it—leave me if you please, Miss Leech."

A few moments afterwards, Cathleen plunged gaily into the amusements of the evening; she did not again meet Earnshaw, and Christmas Day passed away. That evening while Earnshaw was undressing in his chamber, a long room in a remote part of the castle, to which he had been removed, in consequence of the influx of visitors, he suddenly heard that low odd laugh behind him, which the servants called the voice of the laughing man. He at once caught up his lamp and turned in the direction of the sound, his door was not shut, and he perceived the figure of a man pass out of his room.

He strode hastily after the intruder, and caught sight of him ascending a flight of narrow stone stairs, which led to a turret chamber. This time Earnshaw's arm was not in a sling, and he was able to follow swiftly upon the track of the "ghost." He was soon at the top of the stairs.

"Now, how can this being escape," thought Earnshaw, "if he be flesh and blood? That chamber has only one outlet."

In another moment he had entered the chamber. Something made a rush at him, as though to pass him, but Earnshaw opposed this effort. He raised his lamp, and found himself facing a most appalling being.

He was a brave man, but his blood curdled in spite of himself.

(To be continued.)

**A CELEBRATED CLIFF.**—A cliff in Denmark, known as the "Queen's Seat," has just fallen bodily into the Baltic, from a shock of an earthquake. The rock, about 400 feet high, was an object of great interest to tourists from the magnificent view to be had from it. On a clear day Rugen and the coast of Pomerania could be plainly seen. Everything has disappeared except some masses of chalk, which form a sort of island near the shore. No life has been lost, but the inhabitants and neighbouring villages were terrified at the noise produced; which lasted several seconds.

### FACETIÆ.

**WHY** is a farmer impressed by the letter G?—It will convert oats into goats.

**THE** late Queen of Spain should change her name from *Isabella* to *Was-a-belle-a*.

"**SIR**, you have broken your promise," said one gentleman to another. "Oh, never mind! I can make another just as good."

**IF** this world is a free show, what's the price of admittance? Sin, sorrow, a small trifle of sunshine, and a good deal of shadow.

**ALL** the women of the villages on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico are in the habit of swimming. The young ladies are all diving belles.

**TAKING** two letters from money, and there will be but one left. We knew a fellow who took money from two letters and there wasn't anything left.

**A** PORTUGUESE mayor enumerated among the marks by which the body of a drowned man might be identified, "a marked impediment in his speech."

**A** CHANDLER having had some candles stolen, a person bid him be of good cheer, "for in a short time," said he, "they will all come to light."

**IN** a shop window in an obscure part of London is this announcement: "Goods removed, messages taken, carpets shaken, and poetry composed on any subject."

### DISEASE OF THE HEART.

**AN** old gentleman travelling some years ago inside the Bath mail, had two ladies, sisters, for companions. The younger, an invalid, soon fell asleep, and the old gentleman expressed his regret to see so charming a young lady in ill health.

"Ah, yes, indeed," sighed the elder sister, "a disease of the heart."

"**DEAR** me!" was the sympathetic response, "at her age? Ossification, perhaps?"

"Oh, no, sir, a lieutenant!"

"**HAVE** I not offered you every advantage?" said a doting father to his son. "Oh, yes," replied the youth; "but I could not think of taking any advantage of my father."

**FULL OF GLORY.**—A little fellow was eating some bread and milk, when he turned round to his mother and said: "Oh, mother, I'm full of glory! There was a sunbeam on my spoon, and I swallowed it."

**MADAME RACHEL** has obtained a rule nisi against her attorney for, as she alleges, cheating her. Her shop is "closed for reparations." A waggish boy has scratched on the shutters. "Beware of the paint."

**A** FELLOW coming from the top of the Alleghanies to London, in winter, was asked whether it was as cold there as in this city. "Horrible cold," said he; "for they have no thermometers there, and, of course, it gets just as cold as it pleases."

**A** LITTLE girl, who was passing with her father from one room into another, bumped her head against the open door. She began to cry, but was comforted. On her way back the father said, "Now, my dear, we'll shut the door." "No, papa, leave it open, so somebody else bump 'is head."

**THE** High Sheriff of a certain Welsh county gives such an excellent Christmas dinner to the prisoners in the county gaol, that it is the custom of the neighbourhood, about that time of the year, to commit some trifling offence in order to be eligible to partake of the Sheriff's bounty!

**TWO** San Francisco policemen tried to arrest a Chinaman. They found it necessary to leave him for a moment, and so handcuffed him with his arms each side of a lamp-post. When they returned the prisoner was gone; he had climbed up the post, and swung his arms over the top.

**ANECDOTE OF THE LATE LORD PANMURE.**—Two young English noblemen were paying a visit to Lord Panmure at Brechin Castle. One day he wrote a letter to Panlathie, a tenant of his, to come and dine with him, and at the same time he ordered him to bring a sum of money. Panlathie was aware when he got that order that something was to be done. After dinner, Lord Panmure gave the first toast, which was "All hats in the fire, or 10s on the table."

Four hats were immediately in the fire. One of the English noblemen gave the next toast, "All coats in the fire, or 50s on the table." Four coats were committed to the flames. The other English gentleman gave the next toast, "All boots in the fire, or 100s on the table." The whole of the boots were committed to the flames. Panlathie's toast came next, "Two foreteeth in the fire, or 200s on the table," when Panlathie pulled his teeth out and threw them in the fire. The English noblemen looked amazed. He had ivory teeth, unknown to them, and Panlathie went home without hat, coat, or boots, but he had 500s in his pocket. Lord Panmure thought much of his tenant after that.

**IN** some of the fashionable churches the programmes of the music are printed and distributed in the pews. It is suggested that opera-glasses will come next. But that is not the worst calamity that might befall—the ladies might encase a pet parson's sermon.

**A TENDER-HEARTED RAG.**—At the Hammer-smith Police Court, recently, during an inquiry as to what constituted a *bona fide* traveller, Mr. Ingham, the presiding magistrate, said of all the compassionate and innocent persons who lived, persons who kept public-houses were the most tender-hearted, for they could not resist the appeal of poor thirsty souls!

### NOT ON OUR SIDE.

**IT** was customary in some parish churches for the men to be placed on one side, and the women on the other. A clergyman, in the midst of his sermon, found himself interrupted by the talking of some of the congregation, of which he was obliged to take notice. A woman immediately rose, and, wishing to clear her own sex from the aspersions, said:

"Observe, at least, your reverence, that it is not on our side."

"So much the better, good woman; so much the better," answered the clergyman; "it will be the sooner over."

**JOHN PAUL** says: "I never was a good carver, which is one good reason why I do not have turkey on my table every day instead of only once a year. Hash is much easier to help; there are no joints to puzzle me, no crooked necks, side bones, and gizzards to drive me to distraction, so I make it the standing dish in my household. Those who think we take it for cheapness make a mistake. The convenience of the thing is its recommendation."

**'ARM-ONIOUS.**—We have heard of people "out of luck" and "out at elbows"—of shopkeepers "out of" the very identical article one particularly wants to purchase—of crack shots "out of practice" when they fail to hit a haystack; but we never heard of human beings being "out of" any members of their body until the other day, when the following advertisement caught our eye:—"Wanted, a situation as nurse, where the children are out of arms." We fancy it must be a mistake, and that nurse means she wants a place where the little dears are perfectly 'armless.

### SMART REPLY.

**A** young lieutenant, residing in lodgings, the sitting-room of which was very small, was visited by one of his fashionable military friends, who, on taking leave, said, alluding to the smallness of the apartment:

"Well, Charles, and how much longer do you mean to continue in this *nitchell*?"

To which he wittily replied:

"Until I become a *kernel*."

**A GRAVE JOKE.**—A bet made by a wag of Berlin on New Year's-day attracted crowds to one of the principal streets of the capital. In this street there is a hairdresser's shop, and the author of the bet had undertaken to sit for four hours, without moving, in the place of the wax figure in the window. At three in the afternoon he appeared at his post, dressed in a white sheet and with a huge wig on his head, surmounted by a fez cap. Every effort was made by the bystanders to make him show some sign of life. Street boys were tempted by the promise of large rewards to make their most ridiculous grimaces, and address him in all sorts of funny speeches; but all in vain. He remained immovable until the clock struck seven, when he arose, bowed gravely to the assembled crowd, and retired into the shop.

**A FARMER IN SEARCH OF A WIFE.**—The following curious advertisement appears in a recent issue of a Yorkshire contemporary. The gentleman, whose only requisites are "love, peace, happiness, and from 1,000l. to 2,000l.," gives his real name and address, as a pledge of his *bona fides*:—"Wanted, a wife, by a handsome young farmer, who is desirous of becoming domesticated, and of enjoying the society of a young, good tempered female, who would tempt him away from his market, festivities by her pleasing and gently persuasive manners." She must not exceed 20, unless she be a widow, whose family



must not exceed six. Want of beauty would be no kind of objection, provided she possessed from 1000*l.* to 2,000*l.* His rent, tithes, and taxes are all paid up, and he is wholly free from debt. All that he requires is love, peace, and happiness. Apply —, near Tanbury."

**DRESSING FOR BREAKFAST.**—At most large houses nowadays there is quite as much ceremony and restraint at breakfast as there is at dinner. Four or five servants hand round the hot things, and in many places even tea and coffee is done at the sideboard. Shooting things and knickerbockers are forbidden, and full morning dress de rigueur. To such an extent is this carried, that a case is known at a Highland shooting box where a noble lord invited a neighbouring laird to come over for two nights to shoot. The first morning the guest came down in his shooting things, and, though it was a man's party, he received a hint from his host, that at his house they were in the habit of dressing like gentlemen for breakfast. The Highland laird said nothing, had his good day's shooting, and came down the following morning in full evening "get up," white tie and all. This time when his host remonstrated, he said, "Well, my lord, I only brought two suits. One I wore yesterday, and you didn't like that, so I put on the other to-day."

#### SEEING DOUBLE.

An old miser, who was exceedingly parsimonious, being ill, was obliged reluctantly to consult a physician.

"What shall I do with my head?" asked the man. "It is so dizzy I seem to see double."

The doctor wrote a prescription, and retired, saying:

"When you see double, you will find relief if you count your money."

A YOUNG lady from "the States" arrived in Hamilton, Canada, the other day, and was seen to be suffering from an aggravated development of the "Grecian bend." At the custom house she was subjected to the usual treatment, and relieved of twelve yards of black silk velvet, six pairs of French kid gloves, forty yards of rich lace, four white ostrich feathers, and a bottle of magic hair restorer. She was convalescent at last accounts.

**PRACTICAL V. THEORETICAL.**—A college professor was being rowed across a stream in a boat. Said he to the boatman, "Do you understand philosophy?" "No, never he'd of it." "Then one quarter of your life is gone. Do you understand geology?" "No." "Then one half your life is gone. Do you understand astronomy?" "No." "Then three-quarters of your life is gone." But presently the boat tipped over and spilled both in the river. Says the boatman, "Can you swim?" "No." "Then the whole of your life is gone."

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Mr. Punch to ask:

1. What is the Ritual Commission doing now?
2. Whether one part of the Thames Embankment won't be worn away before the other is completed?
3. When there is going to be easy communication between Guard and Passenger on every railway?
4. When improved fire escapes will be made and used?
5. When the police force will be improved?
6. When known and suspected thieves can be dealt with preventively, and their nests destroyed?
7. Whether as to subjects of questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, we must wait for some tremendous accident or fearful crisis to hurry us into active measures.—Punch.

**THE BOYS' OWN BEAK.**—A good deal has lately been said about a sentence by which a justice at petty sessions sent a lot of little boys, manacled like felons, to gaol for "loosing and obstructing the streets." Several letters have appeared in the *Times* under the heading of "Untempered Zeal." Would not "Ill-tempered Zeal" have been the more accurate superscription?—Punch.

#### THE DOCTOR'S BILL.

**Our Stout Cook:** "What's this? 'Medical Attendance, two-an-six!' Well, that's a good'un! Why, I attended on 'im! an' ad' to wait two hours in that there Surgery!"—Punch.

**THE POPULAR MINISTER.**—Mr. Reverdy Johnson ran a terrible risk when he went the other day to Luton, where they make miles and miles of straw plait; for, suppose he had been "bonneted?" In connection with this subject, we should be glad to know what and where "The Miles Plaiting Institute" is, at which Mr. Jacob Bright has lately been speaking on education.—Punch.

**TABLE TALK.**—I met with rather a curious superstition the other day at a gentleman's house in Warwickshire. A lady's maid, noticing that some of her mistress's pocket-handkerchiefs were stained, asked the laundress the why and wherefore of this, as she herself had never noticed the spots before. She re-

ceived the following answer:—"Her ladyship has been eating apples at dessert, and wiping her lips after; the juice has caused the stains, and they won't be got out till the year comes round again." "What do you mean by till the year comes round?" "Why, that you won't be able to wash out those stains until apples come in season again." The owner, not treating the superstitious dictum with very great respect, had the handkerchiefs sent to a chemist, and received them back spotless in three or four days; the chemist saying that apples had had nothing to do with the stains, but that they were caused by rhubarb juice. The superstition is a curious one, but whether peculiar to Warwickshire or not, we are unable to say.—Will-o'-the-Wisp.

#### NEW AND STRANGE.

**Groves (re-visiting his native scenes):** "Dear me, yes, all so altered! That church is new—and that's new—and that's new—and—"

**Friend's wife (who has no romance in her nature):** "Yes! and what did you think of our new moon last night?"—Fun.

**VERY So-so.**—When may a man be said to be thoroughly "sewn-up?"—When he has pins and needles in his foot and a stitch in his side.—Fun.

#### FEMININE TACT.

**Mamma:** "Sydney, I insist on your eating that piece of meat. You should not have asked for it if you did not want it."

**Sydney:** "It's so big, ma."

**Sissy:** "But if you fold it up, it won't look so big."—Fun.

**PROPHETIC.**—Few people of those who at the time laughed when Mr. Gladstone on resigning office declared that "time is on our side!" could have been aware that he was alluding to his future election for Greenwich.—Fun.

#### GIPTSIES' SONG.

WHERE fairies are sipping

The dew from the heath,

Or wantonly tripping

In light mazy wroth—

Amidst their blithe dances

We Gipsies are seen,

When the soft moonbeam glances

All night on the green—

While bright stars are moving,

Their language we see,

At midnight, while roving,

Unquestioned and free.

The future's sealed volumes

We read by their light,

In luminous columns

Revealed to our sight.

As the wild bird's free pinion

Unfettered we roam;

And through earth's wide dominion

Each land is our home.

If to Gipsies were given

In your fair halls to dwell;

They'd prefer the bare heaven

And the heath-blossomed dell.

AGNES STRICKLAND.

**SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION.**—Mr. Hepworth Dixon has discovered Shakespeare's religion. He was a Puritan. This theory is founded on the following facts: It is known to most readers of Shakespeare that Falstaff was originally called Oldcastle. In this he is supposed to have followed the monkish traditions which threw ridicule and discredit upon Sir John Oldcastle, a good knight, who was one of the earliest martyrs of the Reformation. Later in life the dramatist discovered that he had done grievous wrong by identifying Sir John with the buffoon and libertine, and he therefore altered the name of this character to Falstaff. Not only did he do this, but in the epilogue to the second part of *King Henry IV.*, he goes out of his way to vindicate Oldcastle's memory, "who," he says, "died a martyr, and this is not the man." Mr. Dixon declares that as Shakespeare dared to write that confession in the days of Archbishop Whitgift, he must have been a Puritan.

**THE TERM OF ENLISTMENT.**—An impression appears to prevail, that among the new schemes of the Government will be one to favour a shorter term of enlistment, by keeping a certain number of infantry battalions always at home, and a certain number, in effect, localised—in short, never relieved—in India. This would have a very beneficial effect in easing the reliefs, and we do not think there will be any serious practical difficulty in carrying out such a plan. We have now, or we very soon shall have, 52 battalions at home, as against 52 in India and 37 in

the colonies, or 89 altogether abroad. The colonial strength will no doubt be speedily reduced by five or six battalions; and if we put 85 as the number of battalions to be provided for we shall not err on the wrong side. Now, if we took the 25 double-battalion regiments, kept one battalion of each always at home in time of peace, in a high state of efficiency, in the event of war, leaving the other battalions always in India, we should have only 60 battalions abroad to provide for in the way of ordinary relief. For this purpose we should have 30 battalions at home on the roster for service to provide for the due return home, after ten years, of 27 battalions in India and 33 in the colonies. Our infantry strength would thus be made up—at home, 25 first battalions, not liable to foreign service except in war time, and 30 battalions liable to serve in India and the colonies, or 55 in all; abroad, 25 second battalions not entitled to relief, and 27 to be relieved in India, or 52 altogether, and 33 entitled to relief in the colonies.

#### STATISTICS.

**OUR GREAT TOWNS.**—The Registrar-General estimated the population of London in the middle of the year 1868 at 3,126,636; his estimate for the middle of the year 1869 is 3,170,754. For Liverpool, the borough, the estimate was 500,676 in 1868, and is 509,052 in 1869; Manchester city, 366,835 in 1868, and 370,892 in 1869; Salford borough, 117,162 in 1868, and 119,350 in 1869; Manchester and Salford, 483,997 in 1868, and 490,242 in 1869; Birmingham, the borough, 352,296 in 1868, and 360,846 in 1869; Leeds, the borough, 246,851 in 1868, and 253,110 in 1869; Sheffield, the borough, 232,362 in 1868, and 239,752 in 1869; the city of Bristol, 167,487 in 1868, and 169,423 in 1869; Bradford, the borough, 134,000 in 1868, and 138,522 in 1869; Newcastle-upon-Tyne, borough, 127,701 in 1868, and 130,503 in 1869; Hull, the borough, 122,628 in 1868, and 126,632 in 1869; the city of Edinburgh, 177,039 in 1868, and 178,002 in 1869; the city of Glasgow, 449,868 in 1868, and 458,937 in 1869; Dublin city and some suburbs, 319,985 in 1868, and 320,762 in 1869. The estimates are made upon the assumption that the increase has been at the same annual rate as the ascertained rate between the censuses of 1861 and 1861; but in the instance of Leeds, of Bradford, and of Hull, whose municipal authorities have represented that the rate of increase has been greater there than that which would be thus assumed, the estimates are based upon a local enumeration of the inhabited houses. The population of the city of Berlin is stated at 702,487 in 1867, and of Vienna 660,000 in 1868.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

**DURING** the year 1868 not a single shot was fired by the French army. A rare thing.

**DURING** 1868 the Hamburg steamers crossed the Atlantic 56 times, and carried 30,796 persons to America.

**FRENCH POSTAGE STAMPS.**—The production of postage stamps assumes larger proportions every year; during 1868, 500 millions were produced.

**A PARIS** letter says:—"It is solemnly announced that ladies will wear in their hair this year silver dust; this fashion has been started by the Duchess of Madrid."

**A TELEGRAM** from Borne states that enormous landslides have occurred at Ragatz, in the canton of St. Gall, completely blocking up the valley and stopping the flow of the river Tamina, which is in consequence forming a large lake.

**SIR BERNARD BURKE** tells us, in his "Vicissitudes of Families," that of the twenty-five barons who were appointed to enforce the observance of Magna Charta, there is not now in the House of Peers a single male descendant.

**FOREIGN** game is now becoming a regular article of consumption in Paris. For Christmas not less than 4,000 hares arrived from Germany, besides a quantity of wild boars, deer, and chamois, with a variety of the feathered tribe, from Transylvania.

**AN** earthquake is reported to have occurred in Mexico. It took place on the 26th of December, 1868, and the area of the convulsion included the cities of Colima and Manzanillo. Several persons were killed, many houses were destroyed and nearly all the buildings in both of the towns named were more or less damaged.

**AFTER** a great deal of excavation, an entrance to the subterranean vaults and dungeons of Guildford Castle has been made. The largest room is open, and measures 60 feet by 57 feet; height, 9 feet to 15 feet. Six others have yet to be found. In these dungeons, upon one occasion, no fewer than 600 persons were tortured and killed in a day or two.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**CLARA.**—Life to the young is like a fairy tale just opened; to the old, it is as one read through, ending with death.

**GERTRUDE.**—*Puis coronat opus* means "the end crowns the work," or "puts the finishing stroke to the work."

**LOUISE.**—The literal meaning of "vertigo" is like that of the Latin word *vertigo*, from which it is derived, meaning dizziness, giddiness, or a swimming in the head.

**LEONORA.**—Hasty words often rankle the wound which an injury gives; soft words assuage it, and forgiveness takes away the scar.

**R. CRAWFORD.**—We cannot give an opinion of the fitness of any work of fiction for the pages of THE LONDON READER until we have been permitted to peruse it.

**S. L.**—For weak and inflamed eyes, make a mixture of 3 grains of sulphate of zinc, 10 drops of tincture of opium, and 2 oz. of water; apply three or four times a day.

**REGINALD.**—The wills of deceased persons who have been resident in London, or in some parts of England or Wales, must be proved in the chief registry at Doctors' Commons.

**ELIZABETH MINKIE.**—1. Without an introduction, nothing is requisite, except what ordinary good breeding would dictate. 2. Handwriting would be good with a little more care, and if less sloping, would be better.

**H. OVERTON.**—The salary at first is 500. The "rise" is by promotion according to seniority, excepting in the case of persons of very extraordinary ability, when the rule is broken through.

**PORTY.**—"The Ghost of Porchester Castle," by John Dove, is too lengthy; "Pointing Truth," by R. Sandys; "If I could but Forget Thee," by Fanny; not being suitable to our columns, are declined with thanks.

**FLETA.**—1. To obtain any, even the smallest amount of success, you must be regularly trained and educated for the success. 2. Yes, by book post, which allows four ounces in weight for one penny.

**J. B. C.**—1. The flushing you complain of is probably caused by indigestion; avoid veal, pork, pastry, and beer; take homoeopathic colica, and a glass of spring water, the first thing every morning. 2. Handwriting very good.

**FANNY.**—*Andante* is a musical term, and implies a movement somewhat slow and sedate, but in a gentle and soothing style; it is often modified as to time, by the addition of other words, as *andante affettuoso*, *andante cantabile*, &c.

**PHILIP.**—Any person licensed to keep a refreshment house, on making a first application for a wine licence, must sign a requisition according to a form supplied by the excise officer, and obtain the sanction of the justices.

**AGUSTA.**—*Chiroplast* is a square board on which are placed various mechanical contrivances for exercising the fingers of a pianist. *Chiroplast* means a guide for the hand in pianoforte playing.

**OSCAR.**—The *Magnolia glauca* was brought into this country from North America in 1688; the laurel-leaved magnolia, or *Magnolia grandiflora*, was brought about 1734; the dwarf magnolia, or *Magnolia pumila*, came from China in 1789.

**R. M.**—India Stock obtained its great value from the fact that the East India Company was all through merely an association of merchants. The shares in the association arose as their vast wealth accumulated all over the Asiatic world.

**WILD ROSE** must know that "aspiration" is not "inspiration." Her only course is to place herself under the care and tuition of a professional teacher, who, if her voice and talent be sufficiently good, will put her in the right way of attaining her object.

**R. B.**—Giving a person into custody upon an unfounded charge is false imprisonment, assault, and trespass; and in case of an unlawful arrest or otherwise, it is no excuse that the party arresting made a mistake, and arrested the wrong man.

**THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN.**—The offices of this society, we stated a short time since, were in Langham Place. We were in error; they have removed to 25, Great Marlborough-street, Regent-street, W., two years since.

**A READER.**—To tighten the hands: Take a wineglassful of Eau-de-Cologne, and another of lemon juice, then scrape two cakes of brown Windsor soap to powder, and mix well in a mould; when hard it will be an excellent soap for the purpose you require.

**M. H.**—A document which purports to be an agreement, and which is valid upon the face of it, but which is tendered in evidence to show the transaction with which it is connected to be a fraud, is admissible in evidence, although unstamped.

**ADA.**—The noblest revenge we can take upon our enemies is to do them a kindness: for, to return malice for malice, and injury for injury, will afford but a temporary gratification to our evil passions, and our enemies will only be re-

dered the more bitter against us; but, to take the first opportunity of showing how superior we are, by doing them a kindness—the sting of reproach will enter deeply into their soul, and while unto us it will be a noble retaliation, our triumph will not unfrequently be rendered complete, not only by blotting out the malice that had otherwise stood against us, but by bringing repentant hearts to offer themselves at the shrine of friendship.

**GREGORY.**—*Lois suspects* was enacted by the French Convention, in 1793, during the reign of terror; it filled the prisons of Paris. The Public Safety bill, of a somewhat similar character, was passed in 1853, shortly after Orsini's attempt on the life of the Emperor.

**CHARLES.**—The "Interim of Augsburg" was a decree issued by the Emperor Charles V., in 1543, with the view of attempting to reconcile the Catholics and Protestants, in which it entirely failed. It was afterwards revoked. The term "Interim" has been applied to other decrees and treaties.

**THEODORE.**—The Human Lectures on Theology were instituted at Cambridge through the will of the Reverend John Hulse, who died in 1790; they commenced in 1820, when twenty lectures were given by the Reverend Christopher Benson.

**EDMUND.**—*Lettres de Cachet* were sealed letters from the King of France, by virtue of which those persons against whom they were directed were thrown into prison, or sent into exile; they were introduced about 1670. Proceedings very similar to the *Lettres de cachet* were adopted in the Federal government of North America at New York.

**MARTIN.**—The Green-Bag Inquiry derived its name from a green bag full of documents of alleged sedition, laid before Parliament by Lord Sidmouth, in 1817. Secret committees presented their reports, and bills were brought in to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and prohibit seditious meetings.

**CLAUDÉ.**—The word Metropolis is derived from the Greek *metropoli*, a title given at the council of Nice to certain bishops who had jurisdiction over others in a province. The dignity is said to have arisen in the second century, through the dissentient bishops in a district referring to one of superior intellect.

**ROGER.**—Metaphysics is the science of abstract reasoning, or that which contemplates the existence of things without relation to matter; the term literally denoting "after physics," originated from those works having been put at the head of some essays of Aristotle, which follow his treatise on physics.

## THOSE BROWN EYES.

Ask me why I love the maiden  
With those earnest, thoughtful eyes;  
Mounted on his glossy pinion,  
Ask the swallow why it dies!

Law of nature is the latter,  
And the former's just the same,  
Hearts by passion fond enthralled,  
Give it but a softer name.

And the swallow gaily soaring,  
But obeys its fate's decree,  
Her dear self for aye adoring,  
May it be my destiny!

I could ne'er resist her tender,  
Wondrous modest, loving gaze,  
Had my heart been adamant,  
'T would have kindled love's fond blaze.

ALFRED C. L. 1889.

**C. G. J.**—Devonshire Custom.—When a child is about to be christened the nurse, on going to the church, takes a piece of cake with her (a former time it used to be bread and cheese), and presents it to the first child she meets; if it is a boy, to a boy; if a girl, to a girl. The nurse has to tell the child to whom she gives it to say, "God bless the baby."

**CAROLINE.**—You must be strangely wanting in womanly self-respect, if you know not how to treat a man who professes to be a woman-hater. This delicate-minded gentleman may hate a particular woman, for her particular follies; but for our part, we do not believe in the existence of such a creature.

**IDA MORE.**—To prevent pitting: Procure a camel's-hair brush, dip it in some glycerine, and paint the face with it; the time for application is about the seventh day, when the lotion preventing the formation of matter, saves the skin from being marked. 2. Handwriting with a little more care, would be good.

**J. BROOKS.**—Maroons was a name given in Jamaica to runaway negroes. When the island was conquered from the Spaniards, a number of them fled to the hills, and became very troublesome to the colonists; a war of eight years' duration ensued, when the Maroons capitulated, on being permitted to retain their free settlements, about 1730. In 1795 they again took arms.

**HAMILTON.**—Lynch Law means punishment inflicted by private individuals, independently of legal authorities, and is said to derive its name from John Lynch, a farmer, who exercised it upon the fugitive slaves and criminals dwelling in the "Dismal Swamp," North Carolina, when they committed outrages upon persons and property, which the colonial law could not promptly repress.

**KATE.**—An unmarried lady bears her arms, whether quartered or single, upon a lozenge, without a crest, continuing any difference or mark of cadency her father may have borne. The arms of a widow are also borne on a lozenge, without crest. She retains the impaled arms as borne by her late husband and herself; should she marry a second time, she ceases to bear the arms of her former husband.

**MARIAN.**—Among the many sacred duties and responsibilities devolving upon parents, there is scarcely one of more importance than the training of their children; for they are not mere playthings, nor will they grow up to men and women with strong and fixed principles of honesty and usefulness by mere accident. Their tendencies towards uprightness must be early cultivated and strengthened, and all their evil inclinations checked.

**WEEKLY SUBSCRIBER.**—1. From your description of your earlier life and employment, we would advise Canada, or Queensland, having but little doubt that with energy, you would be successful. 2. Apply, accompanied by an experienced friend, if you have one, if not cautiously, by yourself, to a large outfitter's at the nearest sea-port to your

present residence, and this tradesman will describe to you the necessary clothing, when you tell him the colony to which you have made up your mind to proceed. Keep in mind, however, that most of this class will endeavor to force upon you more than mere necessities; thus, you must, in a great measure, rely upon your own judgment.

**MACDONALD.**—1. The complexion may be rendered delicate and soft by putting milk into the water when washing. 2. The following mixture is very useful in all eruptions of the skin: 4 drachms of ipoeacuan wine, 2 drachms of flowers of sulphur, 1 oz. of tincture of cardamoms; mix, and take one teaspoonful three times a day, in a wineglassful of water. 3. For burns, spread some chalk ointment over some linen rather thickly, and lay over the part; if very painful, apply cotton dipped in lime water and linseed oil.

**R. L. JONES.**—Birds may be preserved in the following manner: Introduce into the cavities of the skull and the whole body, a mixture of salt, alum, and pepper, putting some through the whole length of the neck; then hang the bird in a cool, airy place, first by the feet, that the body may be impregnated by the salt, and afterwards by a thread through the under mandible of the bill, till it appears to be free from smell, then hang it in the sun, or near a fire; after it is well dried, fill the cavity of the body with wool, osmium, or any other soft substance.

**RODOLPH.** (a widower, forty-five, tall, dark, handsome, and very steady. A widow not objected to, with a little money. Fanny, eighteen, tall, and dark. Respondent must be respectable.

**CLAUDE DUVAL.** twenty-two, 5 ft 6 in., dark hair and eyes, good looking, steady, good tempered, and a tradesman.

**J. H.** (sergeant in the army), twenty-seven, 5 ft 7 in., dark and good tempered. A housemaid preferred.

**PATRICK C. O.** forty, 5 ft 6 in., dark brown hair and whiskers, and blue eyes. Respondent must be a good housekeeper, about thirty, and have some money.

**CHARLES B.** twenty-eight, 5 ft 11 in., fair, and would make a good husband. Respondent must have a little money, and be between twenty and twenty-four.

**RICHMOND.** twenty-six, 5 ft 9 in., a good mechanic, fond of home, and a teetotaler. Respondent must be about the middle height, and have a little money.

**H. B. RICHARDSON.** seventeen, medium height, dark, blue eyes, and musical. Respondent must be respectable, well educated, in a good position, dark and handsome.

**LIZZIE F.** eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, fair, and fond of home.

**A YOUNG MAN.** twenty-three, tall, dark and gentlemanly. Respondent must be between seventeen and nineteen, fair, cheerful, and domesticated.

**A HAPPY SCOTSMAN.** twenty-three, 5 ft 9 in., fair, fond of home and its comforts; income about 1000. Respondents must not be more than twenty-two, fair, good looking, good tempered, and fond of home.

**DAISY and FANNY.**—"Daisy," nineteen, medium height, brown hair and dark eyes. "Fanny," twenty-three, tall, dark brown hair, light eyes, and domesticated. Respondents must be respectable and steady.

**PRISY and JANET.**—"Prisy," twenty-four, tall, dark, good looking, amiable, and fond of home. "Janet," twenty-one, tall, fair, fond of home, and would make a good wife. Respondents must be about thirty, good, sensible men; mechanics or tradesmen preferred.

**LIZZIE and LAURETTA.**—"Lizzie," eighteen, 5 ft 3 in., fair, golden hair, handsome, a good musician, and highly accomplished. "Lauretta," seventeen, 5 ft 2 in., fair, brown hair, accomplished, good tempered, amiable, fond of children, and a good housekeeper. Handwriting good.

**JULIA and KATE.**—"Julia," medium height, dark hair and eyes. Respondent must be fair, with blue eyes and curly hair. "Kate," sixteen, 5 ft 6 in., fair, dark eyes and light hair. Respondent must be tall, dark, and have blue eyes; a tradesman preferred.

**EMILY, ALICE, and MARY.**—"E," twenty-six, tall, good looking, and domesticated. Respondent must not be under thirty. "Alice" (a farmer's daughter), nineteen, rather tall, fair, good looking, and accomplished. Respondent must be tall, well educated, and in good circumstances. "Marie," eighteen, 5 ft 5 in., dark, good tempered, and fond of home. Respondent must be rather tall, and not under twenty-two.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

**JOSEPH BATHURST** is responded to by—"Marie," twenty-one, pretty, very domesticated; the daughter of a West-end tradesman.

**HAPPY JACK** by—"Nelly," fair, blue eyes, fond of home, and will make a good wife.

**HEARTY TOM** by—"Kate," dark, pretty, amiable, lady-like and fond of music.

**FREDERICK G.** by—"M. M."

**FLYING SCUD** by—"A Slighted One."

**FLYING STAT** by—"A. K.," a housemaid.

**HETTY** by—"S. P."

**EMILY** by—"G. W. N.," nineteen, 5 ft 8 in., dark, and a tradesman.

**ALICE** by—"B. A." (a bachelor), tall, dark, good looking, with a moderate income; and—"B. G. W.," dark eyes and hair.

**LIZZIE S.** by—"George Jones," twenty-one, 5 ft 6 in., fair, light whiskers, and a mechanic; salary, 800.

**ROSA** by—"Alex," twenty-two, 5 ft 10 in., handsome, with about 2000 per annum.

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